

Mr. Pagnon concentrated his attention on
Belmont in putting pressure on the Balkan
States. There was therefore no question then
of supporting him in a pro-Slav policy for
he did not advocate it or seem to think
that ~~as~~ it would be the Russian policy.

If it becomes ^{Russian} policy much will
depend upon the circumstances under
which the policy is declared. It may coincide
with an outburst of feeling in the same
direction here. R.G.



British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898-1914

Edited by G. P. GOOCH, D.Litt., F.B.A., and
HAROLD TEMPERLEY, Litt.D., F.B.A.

Vol. IX THE BALKAN WARS PART I THE PRELUDE; THE TRIPOLI WAR

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VOLUME IX
THE BALKAN WARS
PART I
THE PRELUDE; THE TRIPOLI WAR

Edited by
G. P. GOOCH, D.Litt., and HAROLD TEMPERLEY, Litt.D.
with the assistance of
LILLIAN M. PENSON, Ph.D,

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Foreword to Volume IX (Part I).

THE decision to publish a selection from the British Documents dealing with the origins of the War was taken by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in the summer of 1924. It was confirmed and announced by Mr. (now Sir) Austen Chamberlain in a letter of the 28th November, 1924 (published in the *Times* on the 3rd December), addressed to Dr. R. W. Seton-Watson. Some extracts from this letter were published by the Editors in the Foreword to Volume XI, and it need only be said here that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs referred to "impartiality and accuracy" as being the necessary qualifications for any work which the Editors were to publish.

In contrast to the eighth volume the first part of the ninth is marked by a complete and harmonious unity. It opens with a study of the unrest caused by Austria-Hungary's annexation of Bosnia and with a faint attempt at a *rapprochement* between her and Russia. By the end of the year 1910 all the signs are those of an approaching crisis. Italy's difference with Turkey over Tripoli inaugurates a period of actual war, and thereafter one or other nation is almost continuously in conflict until Europe plunged into Armageddon in 1914.

The attitude of Great Britain towards these events is mainly that of an observer, and, for once in these volumes, the policy of Germany is not conspicuously noticed. Indeed, England's interest is chiefly aroused by Italy's development as a Mediterranean power (pp. 413-6, No. 480) and by the strange incident of the "Tcharykov note" (pp. 320-50), when Russia incurred the suspicion of attempting to make a secret treaty with Turkey for opening the Straits. But Italy's desire to possess Tripoli, and Russia's desire to enter the Mediterranean, were not new phenomena in European history in respect to which England's policy had to be reconsidered.

The growth of new and aspiring nations in the Balkans, however, presented a fresh phase of that eternal question. The Albanian Rising applied the match to the tinder, the Tripoli War heaped fuel on the flames, and the full blaze was seen in the Balkan War. Here we are concerned not with the war but with the attempts to foresee and avert it. England's interests were very little affected by the matter, and the judgment of her observers is, therefore, of peculiar value to the historian. The policy of Russia is of supreme importance. Material is now published for the first time with reference to the Czar's visit to King Edward at Cowes in August 1909 (pp. 33-5, No. 29, and pp. 37-8, No. 32). This and the further interview with Nicholas II (recorded on pp. 546-9, No. 553) are of considerable historic value in view of the part Russia was now to play. There are several conversations recorded with King Ferdinand of Bulgaria. The most characteristic is that given on pp. 162-4, No. 150, while the most important is that dealing with the meaning of the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty (pp. 569-70, No. 572 *encl.*). There are also interviews with the Serbian statesman, M. Milovanović, one of the ablest of Balkan statesmen. That recorded on August 12, 1910 (pp. 195-7, No. 172), is of special interest. From the point of view of history his views on the "three possible solutions to the Near Eastern question" (pp. 248-50, No. 210) should be compared to M. Sazonov's view of Russia's historic rôle in the Balkans (pp. 408-9, No. 424). To this should be added the British accounts of M. Sazonov's visit to England (pp. 749-72).

The "Young Turkish" régime is not treated very fully, but the interview with Mahmud Shevket (pp. 392-4, No. 403) is of real value. The speech of Talaat Bey reported on August 28, 1910 (pp. 208-9, No. 181, *encl.*), is of great interest, if

authentic; but the evidence available is not sufficient to prove this fact. The interests of England in Asia were never neglected in the decade before the war, and the Asiatic policy of Russia evoked a private correspondence of much interest between Sir Charles Hardinge and Sir Arthur Nicolson (pp. 101-2, No. 92; pp. 105-6, No. 95; pp. 120-2, No. 108). In this connexion Count Aehrenthal made some interesting remarks on Anglo-Russian policy in Persia from the standpoint of an umpire (pp. 166-8, No. 152).

It will be seen, therefore, that though the British rôle was not a predominant one in this volume, the reports of British diplomats throw considerable light on events. Those of Sir Rennell (now Lord) Rodd give the testimony of an observer profoundly versed in the policies and tendencies of the Italy of which he wrote. In this connexion his despatch relating to the proposed Russian mediation between Turkey and Italy is interesting (pp. 376-8, No. 381). It describes "the antecedents of an international action" to produce peace. It was the precursor of many, and more successful, efforts made by the Great Powers to mediate between Turkey and the Balkan League during the years 1912-13. Any study of pre-war international co-operation of this kind is of great importance, and even fuller attention will be devoted to it in the second part of the volume.

The Editors are reserving lists of Errata for their concluding volume as these deal for the most part with very small points. In one instance, however, they wish to make a correction here of a statement which is concerned with a point of international law. Volume VIII, p. 369, quotes a letter from Professor Westlake to Sir Ernest Satow of April 15, 1910. The second sentence runs: "No one but the state can so embody the enemy as to be described by that name with the definite notice and without qualification." It has been suggested that for "notice" the word "article" should be substituted. The Editors think that this suggestion is probably correct. The handwriting is almost illegible, but the sense seems to require this substitution.

The Appendices contain points of unusual interest. For the first time the full text of the letters between Count Károlyi and Mr. Gladstone of May 1880 is reproduced, dealing with a dispute which arose out of the Midlothian campaign and was very famous in its day. Lord Salisbury's views on the Straits question during the years 1891 and 1897 are given in Appendix II and are of some historic interest. The same observation applies to Appendix IV, which discloses a Turkish overture for an alliance in 1911. This was discovered too late to be inserted in the text.

The Cartwright interview, to which reference was originally made in Vol. VII, pp. 837-45, and again in Vol. VIII, p. x, is still a subject of much discussion. The Editors have found nothing to add to the material they have already published on the subject. But they present in Appendix VII further views on the subject from Herr Sigmund Münz, who is thus enabled to give his own version of the matter. The Editors desire to make clear that they do not wish now, as they have not wished on any previous occasion, to express any personal views on this or any other matter. Their own selection of material has been throughout determined by the interest or importance of the documents concerned and not by the accuracy of the opinions or facts to be found in them.

The Belgian Chapter (LXVII) in Volume VIII led to considerable discussion and to a letter from Lord Grey to the *Times*. The Editors have thought it well to reproduce this in Appendix VIII as it has historical interest. They have not thought it worth while to reproduce their own letter to the *Times*, as this merely contains views as to editorial policy which have been frequently expressed in these prefaces (e.g., Vol. I and III, IV and VII, p. viii, Vol. VI, p. ix, Vol. VIII, p. x) and are actually repeated below, v. p. ix.

Once again the private papers of Sir Edward Grey and Lord Carnock have proved of invaluable assistance, not only in interpreting the attitude of the Secretary of State and his principal adviser, but in revealing the inmost thoughts of the British representatives abroad as expressed in their confidential correspondence. It is as well to mention again the statement of Lord Grey (already quoted in Volume VI, p. ix): "I did not, however, regard anything except my own letters and official papers as deciding policy."

In accordance with the practice observed in the preceding volumes the documents in the present volume containing information supplied or opinions expressed by certain Foreign Governments have been communicated to them for their agreement. The response has been generally satisfactory. The Editors can therefore assert, as in all previous volumes, that they have omitted nothing which they consider essential to the understanding of the history of the period. In this connexion they beg to draw attention to their statement made in previous volumes "that they would feel compelled to resign if any attempt were made to insist on the omission of any document which is, in their view, vital or essential."

In addition to despatches and telegrams, there are memoranda and minutes which are properly official documents. No objection has been raised by His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the publication in this volume of any documents of the above kind, nor to the publication of certain similar papers or of private letters, which are not properly official documents, but which are preserved in the Foreign Office.

His Majesty the King has graciously consented to the publication of his own minutes and those of the late King Edward VII. The Editors desire also to acknowledge the friendly assistance and advice of various officials at the Foreign Office, among whom they would like to mention the Librarian, Mr. Stephen Gaselee, C.B.E., Mr. J. W. Field, O.B.E., and Mr. A. F. Orchard. They wish also to thank the officials of the Record Office in London, Mr. Wright, who was in charge of the Diplomatic and Embassy Archives formerly at Cambridge and now at Canterbury, and Miss E. M. Keate, M.B.E., and Miss D. M. Griffith, M.A., who assisted in the preparation of the volume for press.

G. P. GOOCH.

HAROLD TEMPERLEY.

Note on the Arrangement of Documents, &c.

THE technical arrangement and details of this volume are very similar in principle to those of Volumes III, IV, VI and VII. The material deals mainly with one theme—the situation in the Near East in the period preceding the Balkan Wars.

Within the chapters and their sub-sections the papers are placed in chronological order as in previous volumes; and, as before, chronological order means the date of despatch, whether to or from London, not the date of its receipt. The latter date is often added, and readers should be careful to note it.

In the earlier part of the volume some of the documents are taken from the official series of Foreign Office papers in the Public Record Office. The classification of these papers for the period 1898–1905 was thus described in the note prefaced to Volumes I and II (p. ix):—

“They are classified mainly by country (F.O. France, etc.) and within countries by years. For each year the diplomatic documents are separated from the commercial and other classes. Within the diplomatic class there are volumes of outgoing and incoming despatches, outgoing and incoming telegrams, communications with the Foreign Ambassador (‘Domestic’) and with other Government Departments (‘Various’). Papers relating to certain subjects have been specially treated. Some have been placed together in a miscellaneous series (F.O. General), as in the case of the Hague Peace Conference. In other instances all papers relating to a certain geographical area have been placed together, as with African affairs (after 1899) and the affairs of Morocco. Correspondence with the British representative at Paris or elsewhere appears in these cases under F.O. Africa and F.O. Morocco. A third method was to separate the correspondence relating to a special aspect of affairs from the other papers of the country concerned, thus removing them from chronological sequence. This was the case with despatches on African affairs down to 1899, which appear in special series of F.O. France (Africa), F.O. Germany (Africa), etc.”

The note prefaced to Volume III (pp. ix–x) described further the arrangement inaugurated at the beginning of 1906:—

“A new system was inaugurated at the beginning of the year 1906. From that date all papers, irrespective of country, are first divided into certain general categories, ‘*Political*’ (the former ‘diplomatic’), ‘*Commercial*’, ‘*Consular*’, ‘*Treaty*’, etc. The papers are, however, not removed from their original files, the contents of each file being treated as one document. The files of papers are classified within the general categories according to the country to which their subject most properly belongs. The volumes containing papers relating to any country are therefore in a sub-section of the main series, and these sub-sections are arranged in alphabetical order (e.g., ‘*Political*’, ‘*Abyssinia*’, etc.). Previously the correspondence with, say, the British Ambassador at Paris was kept distinct from the communications of the French Ambassador in London, the latter being termed ‘Domestic.’ This distinction is now abolished and all papers relating to a subject are placed together in one file or in a series of files. The historian finds many difficulties in this arrangement, as the files are not arranged in the volumes in chronological or alphabetical sequence. The Foreign Office overcomes these difficulties by compiling a manuscript register of the contents, but this method cannot be used so satisfactorily by the historian. It is to be feared that the new arrangement makes it more difficult for the historian to be sure he has found all the papers relating to a given incident.”

It may be noted that in the references for the volumes of this period the terms "Political," "Treaty," &c., are not used, but the corresponding number given to the series at the Public Record Office is quoted: *e.g.*, F.O. 368 = Commercial.

F.O. 371 = Political.

F.O. 372 = Treaty.

The Editors are informed that the system of arrangement started in 1906 will be continued for the remainder of the period down to the outbreak of the War; but at present this process of arrangement in bound volumes has reached only to the year 1910. Beyond this date the documents are still at the Foreign Office in the original loose jackets, and have not been sorted into any regular sequence. The task of surveying the available material is thus one of great difficulty. The Editors hope that it has been fulfilled adequately by the combination of three methods. A large proportion of the more important papers are printed in the bound volumes of the many series of the *Confidential Print*, and from the references given to these access to the originals in the Foreign Office files is easy. The printed texts can then be checked and the notes and minutes reproduced from the originals. Secondly, application has been made to the Foreign Office library staff for papers to which accidental reference has been found. Thirdly, the Foreign Office registers of despatches and telegrams sent to or received from every British Embassy or Legation have been at the disposal of the Editors for the purpose of searching for documents not otherwise to be found. It is hoped that by the use of these means the danger of material omissions has been overcome; but the position is not nearly so satisfactory as in the period for which a strict chronological series exists.

The Editors have already recorded in previous volumes their regret for the fact that the Embassy archives for the period after 1905 are not generally available. With the exception of Japan (to 1910) and Russia, the Embassies and Legations have not yet sent their later papers to England. The Editors can, however, confirm the judgment previously expressed that the records are more exact and complete after 1906. There are a few cases in the present volume in which the original texts of documents occurring in the *Confidential Print* have proved impossible to trace. In the large number of cases where opportunities for comparisons exist such copies have been found to be verbally exact, though the punctuation and capitalisation is standardised.

The private collections available at the Foreign Office are more complete after the beginning of the year 1906. Many letters have been printed from the private correspondence of Sir Edward (Lord) Grey and from those of Sir Arthur Nicolson (Lord Carnock) and Sir Charles (Lord) Hardinge. The papers of Lord Lansdowne are also now available for use. Some of these were found too late to be published in the earlier volumes of this series, but the matter thus unintentionally omitted will ultimately be published in a later volume. The value of the letters contained in these collections is evident, but it must be noted that they are, generally speaking, more complete in respect of in-letters than out-letters. Attention has been called, for example, to the omission of a letter from Sir A. Nicolson to Sir F. Bertie of July 10, 1911, to which reference was made in Volume VII (p. 359, No. 376, and *note* (2)). The letter is not, however, to be found in the Carnock MSS., and the Editors were unable at the time to trace it, nor have they yet succeeded in doing so.

The value of minutes is again remarkable, and the present volume contains many of great interest by King Edward, Sir Edward Grey, Sir Charles (Lord) Hardinge, Sir Arthur Nicolson, Sir William Davidson, Mr. Alwyn Parker, Mr. (Sir) Louis Mallet, Mr. (Sir) Eyre Crowe, and others.

Plan of Volume IX (Part I).

Chapter LXXI resumes the story of Eastern Europe at the close of the Bosnian crisis. Its main theme is the tension between Russia and Austria-Hungary, intensified as it was by the resentful hostility of M. Isvolski to Count von Aehrenthal. There are several meetings of royal and imperial personages, but of these the most important is the meeting of the Emperor Nicholas with King Edward at Cowes on August 2, 1909 (*Ed. note*, p. 32, and pp. 33-35, No. 29, pp. 37-41, Nos. 32-3). The British accounts of this interview are here published for the first time. King Ferdinand of Bulgaria is the subject of much discussion, but his own views are recorded on pp. 93-4 (No. 86, *encl.*). A conversation of M. Milovanović on his tour through Europe (pp. 89-90, No. 81) sums up the results from the Serbian point of view, and M. Spalaiković reports the Serbian attitude towards the Young Turks (pp. 97-8, No. 88).

The important but obscure subject of the Austro-Russian Rapprochement (January-June 1910) occupies *Chapter LXXII*. The British information is not first-hand on this subject, but there is an important letter from Sir Arthur Nicolson on British policy (pp. 120-2, No. 108) with a reply by Sir Charles Hardinge (pp. 124-5, No. 111). The ignorance of the French Government as to developments between Russia, Italy and Austria-Hungary is also recorded (p. 127, No. 114, pp. 139-40, No. 131). Count von Aehrenthal (pp. 143-5, No. 136) and M. Isvolski (pp. 147-8, No. 139) hardly succeeded in clearing up the difficulties. There is, however, an important conversation of King Ferdinand of Bulgaria reported on May 11, 1910 (pp. 162-4, No. 150).

Chapter LXXIII shows the ominous approach of difficulties between the Balkan States and Turkey (June 1910-March 1911). Even in August 1910 the language of M. Milovanović (pp. 195-7, No. 172) leaves no doubt that he saw a crisis approaching, caused mainly by the persecuting methods of the Young Turks in Albania, in the Serb areas round Usküb and among the Bulgarians and Greeks of Macedonia. There is interesting material also on the Young-Turks themselves (pp. 207-9, No. 181, and *encl.*) and on the Macedonian revolutionaries (pp. 225-6, No. 195). All the signs are those of an approaching storm. A vivid picture of the policies and leading personages of Turkey and the Balkan States is drawn in the despatches and private letters of the British representatives.

Contrary to expectation the first blow came not from the Balkan States but from Italy. The first part of *Chapter LXXIV* (pp. 259-82) details the relations between Italy and Turkey previous to the ultimatum; the second from the ultimatum to the decree of annexation (pp. 282-320).

The chief interest for England is not the Italo-Turkish war but the offer of Tcharykov—the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople—to Turkey to protect her if she would open the Straits to Russian warships (pp. 311-2, No. 289). This "Tcharykov note" raised a question of the deepest interest to England and this is dealt with at length (pp. 320-50). It ended with the disavowal of Tcharykov by the Russian Government.

The fourth section of this chapter deals with peace feelers and negotiations—December 12, 1911, to October 15, 1912 (pp. 351-430). The Russian proposals of mediation, of interest as an international action, are described in a despatch to Sir Rennell Rodd of March 10, 1912 (pp. 376-8, No. 381). A good idea of Young Turk views is given in the interview with Mahmud Shevket (pp. 392-4, No. 403), and

of Russia's 'historic rôle in the Balkans' by M. Sazonov (pp. 408-9, No. 424). The British view is expressed by the Admiralty Memorandum (June 20, 1912) on the Italian occupation of the Aegean Islands and its effect on Naval Policy (pp. 413-6, No. 430). The views of the German Government on the difficulty of approaching Turkey and Italy are also given (p. 430, No. 456). The last section (pp. 430-448) deals with the Treaty of Peace, which the outbreak of the Balkan War compelled Turkey to conclude.

The Albanian Rising is the subject of *Chapter LXXV*. Like all revolts in the Balkans against the Turks, it was certain to cause war if sufficiently prolonged. But the documents show the great difficulties of the King of Montenegro, owing to the flight into his territory of refugees.

Chapter LXXVI deals with the making of the Balkan League, October 23, 1911-August 22, 1912. The phases of the rapprochement between Bulgaria and Servia in the winter of 1911-1912 are described by Sir H. Bax-Ironside, British Minister at Sofia, in a series of despatches and private letters of exceptional interest. One of the rare interviews with the Emperor Nicholas, at a critical moment of Russia's destinies, is included in this chapter (pp. 546-9, No. 553). There is an early draft of the text of the Serbo-Bulgarian agreement, which formed the basis of the Balkan League (p. 556-8, No. 559, and *encl.*). There is also a memorandum of the views of King Ferdinand of Bulgaria on the subject (pp. 569-70, No. 572, *encl.*).

Chapter LXXVII deals with the unsuccessful attempt of Count Berchtold in August, 1912, to avert an explosion in the Balkans by co-operation between the Great Powers in securing administrative reforms. The discussion of the scheme for decentralisation revealed the disunion of the Chancelleries, injured the pride of the Turkish Government, and encouraged the Balkan States to press for more drastic solutions.

The visit of the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs to England in September 1912 is described in *Chapter LXXVIII* in reports by Sir Edward Grey and Lord Crewe, Secretary of State for India. Despite the extreme urgency of the situation in the Near East, the conversations appear to have been mainly concerned with Asiatic problems.

The *Appendices* contain the full text of the hitherto unpublished correspondence between Mr. Gladstone and Count Károlyi of 1880; two pronouncements by Lord Salisbury on the Straits and questions involved in this problem; a statement by Mr. Wickham Steed relating to Count von Aehrenthal's action on the eve of the proclamation of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; some correspondence between Sir Edward (Lord) Grey and the Turkish Ambassador relative to the possibility of an Anglo-Turkish Alliance in 1911; and the final text of the Serbo-Bulgarian Alliance of 1912. *Appendix VI* comprises a short Bibliographical Note on the Balkan League and the Balkan War in relation to Macedonia and Albania. *Appendix VII* gives comments by Herr Sigmund Münz on certain statements made by the British Ambassador in Vienna (v. Volume VII, pp. 837-45) in reference to the so-called "Cartwright interview" at Marienbad in 1911. *Appendix VIII* quotes the text of a letter written by Lord Grey to the *Times* on November 21, 1932, relative to the question of Belgian Neutrality.

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Minute by King Edward.

(This is attached to the following document.)

No 20. Sir F. Cartwright to Sir C. Hardinge Private letter of July 9, 1909, p. 22.

Minute by King George.

(This is attached to the following document.)

Appendix IV. Memorandum by Sir Edward Grey November 2, 1911, p. 780.

List of Abbreviations.

- A. & P.* British Parliamentary Papers, *Accounts and Papers*.
- B.F.S.P.* *British and Foreign State Papers*.
- Churchill* Winston Churchill. *The World Crisis, 1911-14* (1923).
- D.D.F.* *Documents Diplomatiques Français* (1871-1914).
- G.P.* *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette*.
- Martens* G. F. de Martens. *Nouveau Recueil Général de Traités, 1908-13, 3^{me} Série* (Leipzig, 1913).
- Nicolson* Harold Nicolson. *Sir Arthur Nicolson, Bart., First Lord Carnock: A Study in the Old Diplomacy (1849-1928)* (1930).
- O.-U.A.* *Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik, 1908-14*.
- Parl. Deb.* *Parliamentary Debates (House of Lords, or House of Commons)*.
- Pribram* A. F. Pribram: *Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary* (Harvard University Press, 1920-1).
- Siebert* B. de Siebert: *Entente Diplomacy and the World*, edited, arranged and annotated by G. A. Schreiner (New York and London, 1921).
 [This is an English translation, with the addition of a chronological list of documents by the American Editor, of *Diplomatische Aktenstücke zur Geschichte der Entente politik der Vorkriegsjahre* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1921)]
- Siebert-Benckendorff* This refers to a new German edition of the above by Herr von Siebert, containing a number of additions. It is entitled *Graf Benckendorffs Diplomatischer Schriftwechsel* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1928).

Names of Writers of Minutes.

B A.	= Mr. (later Sir) Beilby F Alston	Assistant Clerk in the Foreign Office, 1903-6; Acting Senior Clerk, 1906-7, Senior Clerk, 1907-18.
F D. A	= Mr. F. D. Acland	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1911-5.
R. W. B.	= Mr. R W. Brant	... Assistant Clerk in the Foreign Office, 1900-5, Librarian, 1905-14
E. A. C.	= Mr (later Sir) Eyre Crowe Senior Clerk in the Foreign Office, 1906-12, Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1912-20; Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1920-5.
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R. H. C.	= Mr. R. H. Campbell	Clerk in the Foreign Office, 1907-13, Private Secretary to Sir A. Nicolson, 1913-6, and to Lord Hardinge, 1916-9.
E. D.	= Hon. James (later Sir) Eric Drummond	Clerk in the Foreign Office, 1900-10; Assistant Clerk, 1910-8, Private Secretary to Mr Asquith, 1912-5, to Sir Edward Grey, 1915-6; to Mr. Balfour, 1916-8; Senior Clerk, 1918-9
W. E. D.	= Mr (later Sir) W. E. Davidson, K.C.	Legal Adviser to the Foreign Office, 1886-1918.
E. G.	= Sir Edward (later Viscount) Grey (of Pallodon)	Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, December 11, 1905-December 11, 1916.
J. D. G.	= Mr. J. D. Gregory. Clerk in the Foreign Office, 1902-7, 1909-13. Assistant Clerk, 1913-20, Assistant Secretary, 1920-5; Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1925-8.
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C. H.	= Sir Charles (later Baron) Hardinge (of Penshurst)	Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1903-4; Ambassador at St. Petersburg, 1904-6; Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1906-10; Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1910-6.
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W. L.	= Mr. (later Sir) Walter Langley	.. Senior Clerk in the Foreign Office, 1902-7; Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1907-18.
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R. P. M.	= Mr R. P. Maxwell.	Private Secretary to Sir T. H. Sanderson, 1894-6, Assistant Clerk in the Foreign Office, 1896-1902, Senior Clerk, 1902-13.
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A. P.	= Mr. A. Parker	. . .	Clerk in the Foreign Office, 1906-12; Assistant Clerk, 1912-7, Librarian, 1918-9.
G. S. S.	= Mr. G. S. Spicer	Private Secretary to Sir T. H. Sanderson, 1903-6, and to Sir C. Hardinge, 1906; Assistant Clerk in the Foreign Office, 1906-12; Senior Clerk 1912-9.
R. G. V.	= Mr. (later Sir) R G Vansittart	...	Employed in the Foreign Office, 1908, 1911-3, Junior Clerk, 1913-4; Assistant Clerk, 1914-20, Assistant Secretary, 1920-8; Private Secretary to Lord Curzon, 1920-4; Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1928-30; Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1930- .

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CHAPTER LXXI.

THE POWERS AND THE BALKANS,

APRIL 1909—JANUARY 1910.

No. 1.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/734.
14521/14521/09/89.
(No. 43.)
Sir.

Belgrade, D. April 13, 1909.
R. April 19, 1909.

During a conversation I had yesterday with the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs I mentioned to His Excellency a rumour I had seen mentioned in the press that the Servian Government now intended to revert to the scheme of a Customs Union with Bulgaria, which had been arranged in 1905 but subsequently abandoned.

Monsieur Milovanovitch replied that this rumour was at least premature. A Customs Union with Bulgaria would not really be of great advantage to Servia, as the products of the two countries were almost identical, and an arrangement of the kind in order to work smoothly, presupposed a very cordial understanding between the parties on other matters also, which unfortunately did not at present exist. He was willing to admit the argument that if connected by a Customs Union the two countries together would be in a much stronger position for negotiating on Commercial questions with Austria-Hungary and other States than they occupied singly, but so long as Bulgaria remained in intimate relations with Austria he did not see how the necessary rapprochement could be brought about.

I ventured to reply that so far as my information went I did not think that the Bulgarian Government were in any way bound to Austria, and believed that they would probably follow the line of policy dictated by their own interests without much deference to Austrian wishes.

His Excellency then said that in the first place the attempt would probably be made to negotiate an ordinary Commercial Treaty between the two Countries, but even this would have to be deferred until the settlement between Bulgaria and Turkey had been completed. He admitted that a cordial understanding between Servia and Bulgaria was most desirable and would serve to check the further advance of Austrian and German influence in the Balkan peninsula; indeed he went so far as to say that if such an understanding had already existed a year ago the annexation of Bosnia and the Herzegovina would not have been attempted.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

MINUTE.

The project of a Customs Union was to the front 5 years ago. It very much enraged the Austrians.⁽¹⁾

A. L.

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. Gooch & Temperley, Vol. V, pp. 148-87, Chapter XXXIV, part II.*]

No. 2.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/770.

14099/18941/09/44.

Tel. (No. 121.)

Foreign Office, April 15, 1909, 6.20 P.M.

A communication has been made by the Servian Chargé-d'Affaires to the effect that recent events at Constantinople⁽²⁾ are causing grave anxiety to his Gov[ernmen]t who are especially apprehensive as to the possible attitude of Austria which might be such as to necessitate special measures for the protection of Servian national interests.⁽³⁾ Servian Gov[ernmen]t accordingly think that a complete understanding with Bulgaria would be the surest guarantee against fresh surprises on the part of Austria; and they ask H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] to cooperate with Russia and France at Sofia to secure the end in view.⁽⁴⁾

I have informed Servian Chargé-d'Affaires verbally that as far as H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] are concerned increased solidarity amongst the Balkan States will have our goodwill, but that it is a subject for the States to discuss with each other. I have added that Servian Gov[ernmen]t should be careful, after the agreement which has just been come to, not to take any action which might be construed as having aggressive intentions towards Austria.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 284); to Sofia (No. 86); to St. Petersburg (No. 515).]

⁽²⁾ [The Young Turk Government was overthrown by a revolution in Constantinople on April 18, but was quickly restored by Mahmud Shevket.]

⁽³⁾ [The communication from the Servian *chargé d'affaires* was made on April 14. The text is not reproduced, as its tenour is sufficiently indicated above. Sir Edward Grey wrote the following minute upon the communication:—

“We can say verbally that as far as we are concerned increased solidarity amongst the Balkan States will have our goodwill but that it is a subject for the States themselves to discuss with each other.

Say also that they should be careful after the agreement which has just been come to not to take any action which might be construed as having aggressive intentions towards Austria. E.G.”]

⁽⁴⁾ [For a conversation with M. Milovanović on Serbo-Bulgar relations *v.* despatch from Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey, No. 48 of April 28, 1909, printed in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, pp. 797–8, No. 858. The despatch opens with a reference to the above telegram which was not reproduced.]

No. 3.

Sir F. Cantwright to Sir C. Hardinge.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Hardinge,

Vienna, April 15, 1909.

Many thanks for your two letters which came by bag.

Now that the crisis is over people are beginning to breathe a little more freely here and are hoping that things in Europe will soon return to their normal condition. The events of the last few days in Constantinople are, however, causing considerable alarm, as it is felt that if serious trouble begins in Turkey it will soon spread to Macedonia, and events in that Province must call for the serious attention of the Dual Monarchy. Aehrenthal, I feel sure, desires to keep quiet and to avoid further adventures after the dangers he has passed through during the last six months, for if a disturbed state of things continues to exist in the Balkans his enemies will be apt to say that these disturbances are due to him and that Austria-Hungary will have no peace until he is driven from Office. The peace feeling is very strong here, especially among the lower classes, and Aehrenthal is perfectly well aware of this.

⁽¹⁾ [Hardinge MSS., Vol. I of 1909.]

Moreover, as he wishes to please the Emperor—who above all things desires to avoid a war—it is probable that he will use his influence to find a peaceful solution for any problems which may arise in the Balkans or elsewhere. It is rumoured that Aehrenthal wants to be made a Count and the Emperor is not likely to give him that title if he involves the Monarchy into further expensive complications.

I hear that Tschirschky gives Aehrenthal no rest and is always going to see him, and no doubt he makes him understand that without the help of Germany Austria-Hungary would have been in a tight place during the recent crisis. I am also told that the German Ambassador here is very jealous of any foreign Representatives to whom Aehrenthal shows any marks of friendship, and the German Embassy here is evidently working the Austrian press very vigorously of late to make people believe that Russia is coming round to Germany and is abandoning France and England who have shown that they can be but of little value to her in a crisis. I hear that in the last few days a rumour has been started, probably emanating from the German Embassy, that I had said that England is about to pursue an active policy in Macedonia; the rumour is unfounded but its purpose is clear: it is intended to annoy Austrians who do not want any further complications just now in the Balkans.

Sunday last the sensational news was circulated by the press in Vienna that Japan was about to denounce her Alliance with Great Britain; that was intended to show how we were being abandoned by everybody, and that France would soon follow the example of Japan. The correspondent of the "Temps" told me yesterday that a few days before this sensational news appeared in Vienna he had received a letter from his colleague in Berlin warning him to be on his guard against false rumours affecting Japan, as he had reasons to believe that some were about to be launched in the interests of Germany. The latter country loses no opportunity of trying to shake the confidence of continental people in Great Britain, and everything which is false and untrue about ourselves is spread throughout Europe by the newspapers which are under German influence. To-day many newspapers here exert their energies in trying to prove that the recent riots in Constantinople have been inspired by British influences in order to further British interests.

I send you the following rumour for what it is worth; I cannot say at present how far it is true but I think there are reasons to believe that there may be something in it. Vague indications have reached me that an idea exists of sending the Archduke Franz Ferdinand to St. Petersburg on some pretext or other, but really to see the Czar and lay the foundations for a better understanding between Austria-Hungary and Russia. Colonel Martchenko, the Russian Military Attaché here, saw the Archduke a few days ago and has now left for St. Petersburg where, I am told, he will see the Czar before he returns to Vienna. I have always thought that Aehrenthal would try to bring about a reconciliation with Russia by direct action rather than through the assistance of Germany. Prince Urussoff, the Russian Ambassador here, returned to this place directly the crisis was over. I saw him yesterday and enquired of him about the present state of Russian and Austro-Hungarian relations; he replied that they certainly were not good but that if anything they had slightly improved quite recently.

Yours truly,

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

P.S.—I just see in this morning's "Neue Freie Presse" a further villainous libel upon England which comes to the Vienna newspaper via Berlin. It is to the effect that Lowther has been for some time negotiating with the Bulgarian Government with a view to a forward movement of Bulgaria in the event of a crisis arising in Constantinople unfavourable to the interests of Great Britain.

No. 4.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir E. Grey.

F.O. 371/770.

14810/13941/09/44A.

Sofia, April 16, 1909, D. 3 P.M.

Tel. (No. 55.) Confidential.

R. 3.15 P.M.

Your telegram No. 86.⁽¹⁾

Servian Agent yesterday sounded President of the Council on the subject of a close understanding with Bulgaria.

President of the Council informs me in confidence that his attitude on the question is one of reserve. He had enquired what new feature in the Turkish situation had inspired the step; on what point an agreement was desired and what was to be its immediate object. H[is] E[xcellency] interprets it as a desire on the part of Serbia to combine with Bulgaria in certain eventualities for common action with regard to Turkey.

(¹) [v. *supra*, p. 2, No. 2, and note (¹)]

No. 5.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey

F.O. 371/757.

14824/26/09/44A.

St. Petersburg, April 16, 1909, D. 7.55 P.M.

Tel. (No. 204.) Confidential.

R. 9.30 P.M.

Bulgaria. Your telegram No. 518.⁽¹⁾

M. Isvolsky has constantly impressed on Bulgarian Minister for Foreign Affairs that Bulgaria should be patient, and that if she proceeds to extremes she must not count on any support from outside; but he thinks this is fully understood by Bulgarian Government, who are nevertheless very determined and decided.

French Ambassador communicated to M. Isvolsky to-day a telegram from his Government giving your objections to recognition by the three Powers alone.

M. Isvolsky considers that Turkey should certainly be pressed hard to recognize, but if this fails, and in order to avert war, that the three Powers should not then delay in according their recognition. If Germany and Austria-Hungary would be willing to associate themselves in this step, so much the better; but he fears those two Powers would possibly make difficulties as to acceding to recognition until the railway question is settled. In the present temper of Bulgarian Government, and in view of all that has recently occurred at Constantinople and the uncertainty of general situation, he fears delay would be dangerous.⁽²⁾

(¹) [This telegram, No. 518 of April 15 (F.O. 371/757. 14192/26/09/44A), instructed Sir A. Nicolson to ask M. Isvolski "to do all he can with the Bulgarian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] to prevent the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t from precipitating a crisis."]

(²) [A Turco-Bulgarian Protocol was signed on April 19, v. *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, pp. 791-3, No. 858. *encl.*]

No. 6.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir C. Hardinge.*Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Hardinge,

St. Petersburg, April 21, 1909.

. . . .⁽²⁾ I confess I am puzzled as to Iswolsky's position. He declares positively to me that the Emperor does not wish him to resign and that he himself has no intention of doing so. Now I have heard from a source which I consider to be excellent—it is not Dillon though he is very positive on the subject—that the post of Min[iste]r for Foreign Affairs has been partially, not definitely, offered to Goremykin. He was in any case sounded on the subject by the Emperor—some three weeks ago. There is hardly a voice raised in favour of Iswolsky, and I am assured that the Duma is particularly hostile to him. It is generally considered that it is impossible that he should remain. This is what I gather from all sides. But on the other hand I repeat that Iswolsky himself assures me that he will remain, provided always Stolypin does so.

Assuming that Iswolsky has to leave, I am afraid that there will gradually be a change of foreign policy. It is perfectly true that the Emperor gave me the most positive assurances that he would maintain the entente, and that he wished to see it become closer. H[is] M[ajesty] is a man of his word, and I have complete confidence in him, and that he thoroughly means what he says. But I am afraid, and I have grounds for this fear, that the change may come in the following fashion. If a new man, and especially if a man from the Right, were to be named Minister for For[eign] Aff[air]s, I think that the Emperor would be told that in view of recent events the foreign relations of Russia must be cleared up, and that she must see her way clearly into the future. It will be suggested that enquiry should be made of us whether we were disposed to extend and strengthen the entente—or to put it plainly whether we would be prepared in certain eventualities to engage to furnish Russia with material aid. We should doubtless be unable to give a satisfactory reply: and then, although the 'entente' might be preserved in the letter and in regard to the special subjects with which it deals, Russia would drift away from us and come to terms with Germany. I am told by people who I confidently believe have very good grounds for their statements and are certainly in a position to know much, that since the German incident it has been continually impressed on the Emperor that England in an hour of difficulty cannot be depended upon and that she will never move in order to assist Russia. I quite agree with you that it is more than probable that the personal feelings of the Emperor are against any understanding with Germany, and that the recent incident has wounded him deeply. He wants and desires to hold to us very strongly, but I feel pretty sure that he is equally desirous of being assured that he can rely upon us in all circumstances. I was struck by the emphatic manner in which he said to me that the two countries must draw closer together. It is undeniable that the feeling against Germany is at present very deep and very strong—but I am afraid that the feeling is also prevalent that Russia could have acted and have spoken differently if she could have trusted to support from her two friends. I need not belabour these points, but I wish to impress on you that we must not calculate on the anti-German feeling being permanent. If our relations could be established on a more solid basis I should have no fear at all, but I know the great difficulties against this being effected, and that is why I should view with real anxiety any change in the Ministry for For[eign] Aff[air]s.⁽³⁾

Y[ou]rs ever,

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [Hardinge MSS., Vol. II of 1909.]

⁽²⁾ [The first part of this letter makes some suggestions on the necessary changes in the Berlin Treaty. For this subject *v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, Subject Index, *sub* TREATIES, &c.. *Treaty of Berlin.*]

⁽³⁾ [The rest of this letter refers to Persian affairs.]

No. 7.

*Sir C. Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson.*Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Foreign Office, April 30, 1909.

The attention of the Secretary of State has been drawn to the use in official telegrams and despatches of the expression "triple entente" when referring to the joint action of England, France and Russia. The expression is one which is no doubt convenient, but if it appeared in a Parliamentary Bluebook it would be assumed to have some special official meaning and might provoke inconvenient comment or inquiry.

I am requested by Sir E. Grey to ask you to avoid using it in future in your official telegrams and despatches.⁽²⁾

Yours sincerely,

CHARLES HARDINGE.

(1) [Carnock MSS., 1909]

(2) [This letter was sent to all British Embassies in Europe. (F.O. 371/799. 16435/16435/09/50.)]

No. 8.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/758.

19180/26/09/44A.

(No. 113.)

Sir,

*Rome, D. May 8, 1909.**R. May 22, 1909.*

I have the honour to report that Monsieur Rizoff, the intelligent representative of Bulgaria here, called upon me this morning, and expressed his desire to put before me certain personal views of his own. He began by saying that of all the messages of congratulation received by King Ferdinand, that which had been addressed to him by King Edward had given the greatest satisfaction in his country. I might have attributed this observation to a desire to please were it not that I have heard that Monsieur Rizoff has said as much to others regarding the form of the King's telegram. On the other hand he told me that the telegram received from the German Emperor had been deeply resented, as it implied a suspicion of the loyalty of the Bulgarian Government, while it made congratulations dependent on the satisfaction of German material interests. It was the more uncalled for inasmuch as the liquidation of the claims of the Railway shareholders was now in the hands of Turkey and not of Bulgaria. Its terms had acted as a cold douche to many who were disposed after recent developments to advocate in Bulgaria the principle of "sine Germania nulla salus."

Monsieur Rizoff then went on to say that, speaking purely personally, he thought the present moment was ripe for promoting an *entente* among the Balkan peoples. He did not himself believe, in spite of the temporary defeat of reaction that the future of Turkey under the influence of the Young Turk Party was assured, and believed that internal disorder would simmer for a long time and that the diverse national elements would never cohere as a homogeneous unity under constitutional rule. However, for the present the Macedonian question was bound to remain quiescent. Macedonian aspirations had been the only real obstacle to a good understanding between Bulgaria and Servia, and in the latter country the existence of a strong coalition Government made the present time particularly propitious for bringing the two Balkan states into line. He believed, if this could be achieved, Montenegro

being drawn into the same orbit, it might not prove impossible, now that the Macedonian question had ceased to be active, to induce the Greeks also to associate themselves with an entente which had for its object to safeguard the future interests of the Balkan states against more powerful neighbours. The Slav party in Russia would welcome such a scheme and the existence of a strong combination in the peninsula might have its influence in counteracting the temptation now offered to certain Russian statesmen to conciliate the good-will of Germany.

I said that it seemed to me the initiative in such a direction should come rather from within than from without. This Monsieur Rizoff did not contest but said that much might be done in an informal way by the disinterested powers to encourage Balkan statesmen to persevere. I asked him if he had discussed the matter with the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and he told me, as I learn he has also told the French Ambassador, that a little while back the Italian Government were always urging upon him the necessity for a Balkan *entente* but that since the recent successes of the Austro-German combination their spokesman had become much more reserved and timid and it was evident to him that they were indisposed to commit themselves, whatever their unexpressed sympathies might be. For instance Signor Tittoni had assured him he would not be the last to recognise the independence of Bulgaria and would act with the members of the Triple Entente. Nevertheless, after all these had signified their adherence, His Excellency still waited to consult Berlin and Vienna before moving in the matter.⁽¹⁾

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

MINUTE.

The last paragraph is interesting.

L. M.
C. H.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [An important despatch on the question of the recognition of Bulgarian independence is given in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, pp. 795-6, No. 857.]

No. 9.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/758.

19181/26/09/44A.

(No. 114.)

Sir,

Rome, D. May 10, 1909.

R. May 22, 1909.

With reference to my despatch No. 113 of the 8th instant,⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to report that I had a visit this morning from the Servian Minister, who came to urge the same arguments in favour of a Balkan entente as those which had been advanced by the Bulgarian Minister. He said that at Belgrade the Government were quite ready to take up negotiations in this sense. The matter was in the air and he felt that Vienna was aware of it and was already beginning to make preparations to counteract the initiation of such a movement. At Belgrade Austrian opposition would rather tend to promote than defeat the cause at the present moment. But he was anxious as to the effect it might have at Sofia. No opportunity was ever lost of attempting to excite the rivalries of the two Balkan states, and Austrian influence was able to work in many channels especially in commercial issues. He felt a little encouragement at Sofia might help to decide Bulgarian statesmen. Servia could more easily than Bulgaria come to terms with Greece as there was no religious rivalry between them, and might form a connecting link to unite the three. Montenegro would follow Servia's lead. There had not been for long so favourable an opportunity for bringing the Balkan states together into a purely defensive under-

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

standing for the preservation of their respective interests, which would at the same time oppose a barrier to further extensions of Austrian influence in the peninsula.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

MINUTE.

An "entente" between the Balkan States will only take place when they have fully realised the identity of their interests in co-operating against a common danger. It is doubtful whether the Greeks would ever enter into any agreement with the three Slav States.

C. H.
E. G.

No. 10.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/734.
18492/16555/09/39.
(No. 52.)
Sir,

*Belgrade, D. May 12, 1909.
R. May 17, 1909.*

Having noticed in the Austrian and Hungarian papers which I receive, repeated statements that negotiations are in progress between Servia and Bulgaria for the renewal of the Customs Union Scheme of 1905, and that this idea is encouraged and even urged from St. Petersburg, I have tried, but without success, to obtain some confirmation of these statements here.

The Bulgarian Representative denies that any such negotiations are at present in progress, and repeated the view he had expressed to me on a previous occasion, that a rapprochement between the two Countries could only be effected gradually, by means of smaller mutual concessions which would ultimately lead to a more friendly feeling. A beginning had been made in this direction by the conclusion of an arrangement for the use of the Servian or Bulgarian Cyrillic characters in telegraphic communication between the two countries, and he hoped that other steps of the same nature would follow.

Monsieur Milovanovitch told me to-day that no further negotiations with Bulgaria had taken place, and attributed the paragraphs in the Austro-Hungarian papers to a feeling of suspicion and unrest, which induced them to try to obtain information by making unwarranted statements in order to judge by the nature of the démentis they provoked whether anything was really going on.

As an apparent confirmation of His Excellency's view I may mention that Count Forgach recently called upon me, evidently with the object of endeavouring to ascertain whether I knew anything of the alleged negotiations.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

No. 11.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/758.
18485/26/09/44A.
(No. 82.) Confidential.
Sir,

*Vienna, D. May 12, 1909.
R. May 17, 1909.*

Monsieur Manos, who has been the Representative of Greece in this capital for the last nine years, came to see me a few days ago, and as in the course of a long conversation I had with him on Balkan matters he made some observations which appear to me to be of some interest, I venture to report the same to you.

Monsieur Manos began by stating that in his opinion the present state of things in the Balkans was not a stable one, and that therefore it was the duty of all Governments who had interests to protect in that part of the world to be prepared for all eventualities. The Young Turk Party were merely a handful of energetic and determined men who had been able almost by accident to secure the control of the Central Authority at Constantinople, but they represented foreign ideas and foreign methods which were distasteful to the great mass of the Musulman population. It was, however, the latter who really formed the backbone if not the intelligence of the Ottoman Dominions. The Young Turks might be called the revolutionary and anti-religious Party, and it was difficult to conceive how they could remain in power for any length of time and rule on liberal principles. As time went on they would have to lean more and more on the support of some popular General; they would have to overcome opposition by violence, they would have to curtail the liberty of the press; in short, to maintain themselves in power they would have to make use of the same violent methods which had contributed to the collapse of the old régime. The real Turk, if he was anything, was a believer in his Faith; he was in fact a clerical and the world knew what centuries of work it had required in Europe to repress the power of clericalism. Taking these things into consideration, Monsieur Manos said, it was essential for the little States in the Balkan Peninsula to be prepared to act should new convulsions arise in the Ottoman Dominions, and Greece, therefore, had to watch with the greatest attention all developments at Constantinople which might have a reflex action on the future of Macedonia. The Greek army, Monsieur Manos added, was not quite ready as yet for action but would probably be so by the end of the year. I infer from what he said to me that the policy of Greece just now is to do nothing which would precipitate events in Macedonia. According to him Greece did not actually covet the possession of Salonica but it was a matter of life and death to her that the Southern part of Macedonia at least did not fall into the hands of the Bulgarians. The policy of Greece with regard to this matter coincided with that of Austria-Hungary. Monsieur Manos said to me that both Count Kalnoky in former days, and Herr von Kallay more recently, had assured him that the Austro-Hungarian Government had no intention of pushing down to Salonica but that it was a dogma with them that Bulgaria should not be allowed to hold that place. Austria-Hungary would not object to the Greeks going there but in no case could it be admitted that the Bulgarians should do so. Greek occupation of Salonica, according to those two Austrian statesmen, would never be a danger to Austria-Hungary; Greek trade was no rival to that of their country, and freedom of transit for Austrian goods would not be imperilled by a Greek occupation of Salonica. But apart from the effect which the occupation of Salonica either by Greece or by Bulgaria might have on Austro-Hungarian trade, Monsieur Manos declared that there was, in addition, a political question at stake, namely the desire entertained by Austria-Hungary to maintain a kind of balance of power between the minor States in the Balkan Peninsula; to allow Bulgaria to grow to an inordinate size was a danger to the Dual Monarchy as it would give the former the controlling direction of the general foreign policy pursued by the smaller Balkan States. Monsieur Manos is of opinion that, in spite of the affection shown just now by Russia towards Bulgaria, that Power shares the views of Austria-Hungary on the above point and will do nothing to really facilitate the creation of a too powerful Bulgaria. For this reason Monsieur Manos was convinced that Baron von Aehrenthal and Monsieur Isvolsky would do all in their power to prevent the Macedonian question from coming to the fore, and that they would be inclined to bolster up any kind of Government at Constantinople.

I inquired of Monsieur Manos whether he had any information as to the present state of relations between Servia and Bulgaria; he told me that there was a distinct "rapprochement" between those two countries and that the improved relations between them were viewed with anything but satisfaction by Baron von Aehrenthal. Monsieur Manos, however, did not attach too great an importance to this attempt at a "rapprochement"; it might serve Bulgaria's policy for the moment but it could

not last, the interests and ambitions of these two countries were so opposed to each other that in the long run they must separate them from each other. For him Bulgaria's policy was the most tortuous of that pursued by any Balkan State; it was not to be trusted and Prince Ferdinand would continue to play off Russia against Austria-Hungary, and one minor State against the other. Monsieur Manos then told me that Baron von Aehrenthal favoured a "rapprochement" between Roumania and Greece, I presume to balance those two States against Bulgaria and Servia, but—he added—to reconcile Roumania with Greece was no easy task: the Couço-Walach question stood in the way of this. Monsieur Manos said to me that Roumania had taken up this question merely as a "politique de luxe" and not as one of necessity. The King of Roumania had in the past more or less directed the general foreign policy of the smaller Balkan States, and he wished to continue to do so. As in the near future the foreign policy of these States was likely to turn on the Macedonian question, it was necessary for His Majesty to find a "raison d'être" for Roumania to interfere in it; so the King invented the claims of the Couço-Walachs. For Greece, however, the Couço-Walach question was one of vital importance. These people were practically Greeks by education, by tradition and by race; if Bulgaria and Roumania succeeded in making the Great Powers believe that these people were not Greeks and allowed them to be counted to the non-Greek population, Greece, at a settlement by the Powers of the Macedonian question, might lose a large area of Macedonia on the ground that in those portions of that Province the Greeks were in the minority. Monsieur Manos thought that if Roumanian statesmen were inspired by wise counsels, they would give up their claim to the Couço-Walachs, and hold out a friendly hand to Greece, for Roumania and Greece united would, with the help of Turkey, be able to prevent Bulgaria from enlarging her present frontiers. I asked Monsieur Manos whether he thought it likely that under certain eventualities Greece might unite herself with Turkey to repel a Bulgarian advance upon Macedonia. He replied that the idea of such a union would be repugnant to the majority of Greeks, but in evil days one might have to put up with evil company. He asserted most positively that, whether prepared or not, whether with the assistance of the Turks or without it, any Greek Government would be forced by public opinion to attempt to prevent by a war the falling of Salonica into the hands of the Bulgarians.

I asked Monsieur Manos whether he was in possession of any information as to the attitude likely to be assumed by the Albanians with regard to the new Turkish régime at Constantinople. In reply he gave me to understand that the Greek Government, through their Agents, were kept very well informed of all that was going on in Albania. According to Monsieur Manos the ruling classes in that Province showed a marked sympathy for the deposed Sultan, and they were strongly in favour of the maintenance of the régime which existed in the Province under his rule, for under it they had enjoyed all kinds of privileges and advantages. The Albanians had no sympathy for the Young Turk Party, and if the latter did not proceed with very great caution in dealing with Albania, a movement in favour of autonomy would spread like wildfire throughout that Province. Monsieur Manos then said that the mass of the Albanians under those circumstances would turn towards Greece and favour the creation of an autonomous government under the personal suzerainty of the King. The great majority of the Albanians, especially those in the towns, spoke Greek as well as Albanian, and by tradition and education—the better classes of Albanians sending their children to school in Athens—a strong link of sympathy between the two countries had gradually been formed.

Monsieur Manos was of opinion that there was no desire among the Albanians to see their country fall under Italian rule, and still less to see it fall into the hands of Austria-Hungary. He told me that he had reason to believe that Austria-Hungary would not oppose the creation of an Albanian autonomy under the suzerainty of the King of Greece, but that she would not admit the realisation of Italian pretensions on this side of the Adriatic. Greek domination of the Western portion of the Balkan Peninsula was not disadvantageous to Austro-Hungarian commerce, as for a long time

past the Greek merchants had had trade connections with Trieste, and these traditional links were not likely to be easily broken.

It need hardly be said that Monsieur Manos, in talking to me, used all possible arguments to show the necessity of allowing Crete to be annexed to Greece. I will not trouble you with these but will only report to you an observation made by this gentleman to the effect that the cession of Crete to Greece would not be sufficient compensation to his country for the loss of Salonica should the Turks be driven out of Macedonia. Monsieur Manos also said that the cession of Crete to Greece was of special importance to the King who had in a way pledged himself to the nation that the Island would be annexed to Greece in the near future. If it were not, his position might become very precarious.

Monsieur Manos informed me that Baron von Aehrenthal had all along shown his sympathy for Greek aspirations with regard to Crete, and that the Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs would be glad if the Young Turks could see the wisdom of ceding an Island over which Turkey had practically lost all control. Monsieur Manos expressed regret at the fall of Kiamil Pasha who, he declared, had realised that the cession of the Island to Greece was inevitable and had ideas how this might be done.

On my asking Monsieur Manos if he had heard from Corfu whether the Kaiser during his stay there had discussed the future of the Balkan Peninsula with the Greek Premier, he told me that he had received no news as yet from that quarter but he thought it probable that important matters had been discussed there because the present Greek Prime Minister had succeeded in winning the sympathy and the confidence of the Kaiser, and because it was well known that both the Emperor and the Greek Premier were very fond of expressing their views freely on all matters of political importance.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

MINUTE.

The Greeks open their mouths wide. They want Salonica and a Greek Albania, and yet they are the worst fighting race in the whole of the Balkan peninsula. The Turks have every appearance of being able to hold their own from a military point of view for some time to come.

C. H.
E. G.

No. 12.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward Grey,

Vienna, May 28, 1909.

I have received information from a very good source that the Emperor Franz Joseph, after the departure of the German Emperor, instructed His Ambassador in Berlin, Herr von Szögyény-Marich, to remain in Vienna for a few days longer as he wished to talk to him on business. At the audience which took place the Emperor discussed, among other subjects, the present relations between Austria-Hungary and Russia, and His Majesty expressed himself as very dissatisfied with them. He saw little hope of their being bettered in the near future, and he is said to have declared that "die Stimmung in Russland ist ganz schlecht." My informant added that the Emperor told the Ambassador that if the relations did not improve he might be compelled to have to take military precautions. I enquired of my informant whether the retirement of Monsieur Isvolsky would improve the relations between Austria-Hungary and Russia. He replied that in the opinion held

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 2.]

in high circles here it did not matter much whether Isvolsky stayed or went for the irritation in Russia against Austria was so widespread that the change of a Minister would produce but little effect upon it.

I sounded Aehrenthal yesterday afternoon with regard to Austro-Hungarian and Russian relations; he shrugged his shoulders and merely replied that they were correct. Prince Urussoff, the Russian Ambassador, spoke to me yesterday in the same sense.

I feel convinced that here they are desirous of bettering the relations between Vienna and St. Petersburg, and that they are realising all the evil effects which have been produced by the ill-advised pressure brought to bear by Germany upon Russia at a critical moment of the Servian crisis. The German Government will now use every means in their power to prevent a "rapprochement" between Austria-Hungary and any of the Triple Entente Powers. . . .⁽²⁾

Yours truly,

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

(²) [The rest of the letter deals with Crete and Hungary.]

No. 13.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir C. Hardinge.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Hardinge,

St Petersburg, June 6, 1909.

I take advantage of a private opportunity to send a small bag of despatches.

I asked Isvolsky whether the invitation for the Imperial meeting in Finnish waters emanated from here or from Berlin. He replied that it was difficult to say. The correspondence between the two Emperors was very frequent, and that in the course of it the desire for a meeting was expressed by the Emperor William, and he gathered that the Emperor Nicholas had intimated that he would be in Finnish waters on such and such a date. Isvolsky said that v[on] Schön and not Prince Bülow would accompany the German Emperor. He observed that it was odd but that the Germans were always impressing on the Russians that the latter should not have taken the recent German intervention amiss, but should, on the contrary, be grateful for it, as it avoided the danger of war. Further that Russia never properly responded to the friendly action which from time to time Germany took in regard to her. In fact the Germans assumed that they had grievances against Russia; and when asked to specify they either mentioned Reval, or the tone of the Russian press, especially the latter, which they considered was particularly unjust towards Germany, and more hostile to her than to Austria. If it were pointed out that recent Austrian policy was not and could not be agreeable to Russia or in favour of Russian interests, and that Germany had enabled it to be carried out by her stout and hearty support of it, and that consequently the Russian public and press did feel a certain animus against Germany, great surprise was affected at this view.

Isvolsky remarked that German methods were peculiar and clumsy. They first hit you, and then pretended to be surprised that you were not pleased. He was sure that the German Emperor would not talk politics with him: he had never done so: and the Emperor Nicholas did not at all like finding himself involved, tête à tête, in a political conversation with the German Emperor. Of course Russia must keep on good terms with Germany, but he said it was not an agreeable or an easy task. I gather that no one on this side looks forward to the meeting with much pleasure, with the exception possibly of some in the Suite. The papers have hitherto barely noticed the meeting. I daresay they do not dare to make any comments.

(¹) [Hardinge MSS., Vol. II of 1909.]

I hope that neither Sir Edward nor you will think me captious, but I venture to submit that we must not string the bow too tightly over these Persian incidents. I wholly and fully appreciate that there is a public in England which cannot be ignored; and I perfectly admit that General Snarsky has been a most troublesome gentleman and has gone much too far on occasions; but we really should not break off with these people on that account. The annoyance which Russian action at Tabreez has very naturally caused, would not be proportionate to the very serious consequences which would ensue if we allowed it to break down our understanding. I think that now all is on proper lines again; but we must not allow the machine to run entirely off the rails: and I submit that we must keep these people with us, unless we find that it is absolutely impossible to work with them. It would be risky for the future if we were to be isolated. It is most desirable that the Emperor, Stolypin and Iswolsky should go to the approaching meeting in a perfectly friendly mood towards us, and they should not have any seeds of irritation in their minds. It would soon be discovered if such seeds had been sown, and they would be carefully watered and nurtured and might be developed.

I spoke to one of the Russians who is a member of the party about to visit England: and I asked him whether the bulk of Liberal opinion in Russia did not desire to encourage friendly intercourse with England, and whether interviews between The King and the Emperor were not welcome to all liberal parties. He replied that such was undoubtedly the case, and they were all of opinion that the oftener the Emperor saw The King the better it would be for constitutional progress in Russia. I said he might, if he had an opportunity, mention this fact while in England, as unfortunately there was a section in England who thought otherwise, and it would be well to enlighten them.

Iswolsky rubs his forehead as to how the Cretan question is to be solved: and continually asks me if I have any news from London or from Constantinople. Turkhan Pasha continues to expatiate on the determination of his Government not to permit the union.

Sossanoff is to be Tcharykoff's successor, and Iswolsky is anxious to carry out other diplomatic moves so as to find a place for Hartwig. Of course Poklewski goes to Tehran. Iswolsky would have liked to have had him as 'adjoint,' but his nationality precludes his appointment.

I wrote to you by last bag: and have nothing to add as to the internal situation. I shall see both Sir Edward and you shortly.

Y[ou]rs ever,
A. NICOLSON.

No. 14.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir C. Hardinge.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Hardinge,

Vienna, June 10, 1909.

Dr. Milowanowitch recently passed through Vienna but only stayed a few hours here and, I believe, saw no political people. A person, however, who met him, tells me that Milowanowitch acknowledged that the rumours that he went to Rome in order to arrange a marriage between the daughter of King Peter and an Italian Prince, were without foundation and were started merely to hide the real purport of his journey which was to meet the agent of a French financial group in Venice to arrange for a loan.

My informant, who is a personal friend of Milowanowitch, told me that he had discussed the late crisis with the Servian Minister. It appears that Milowanowitch

(1) [Hardinge MSS., Vol. I of 1909.]

asserted that on September 4th last he had seen Isvolsky at Karlsbad, and that on that occasion the Russian Minister had informed him that the annexation of Bosnia by Austria-Hungary was only a question of time and would take place in the near future. Russia, he added, was not in a position to offer serious opposition to this step being taken but Isvolsky suggested that nevertheless it might be convenient if Serbia raised a howl over the business. When Milowanowitch started on his round of visits to the European Courts after the annexation, he met Isvolsky in Berlin. There Isvolsky, according to what Milowanowitch said here, again declared that Russia was not in a position to give serious support to Servian aspirations, but nevertheless he advised the Servian Government not to abandon them. He also advised them to clamour for compensation as loudly as possible, as the more stir they made over the Bosnian annexation, the more likely it would be that in the end Austria would give way a little on economic questions under the pressure of the European Cabinets. Milowanowitch said to my informant that he then proceeded to London and laid the situation of his country clearly before Sir Edward Grey, who then told him that all he could do for Serbia—considering that the clamour for compensation appeared to be more or less of a fictitious character—was to give Servian aspirations the full weight of British diplomatic support as long as Russia did the same, in the hope that thereby they might be satisfied to some slight extent. Milowanowitch appears to have made no complaints against us, on the contrary, he said that Sir Edward Grey had done almost more than he had undertaken to do for Serbia. The Servian Minister's resentment seemed to be directed rather against Monsieur Isvolsky. . . .⁽²⁾

Yours truly,

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

⁽²⁾ [The last part of this long letter refers to the proposed meeting of the German Emperor and the Czar, to King Ferdinand's visit to Vienna, to M. Tchirikov's appointment to Constantinople, to the Cretan question, and to the possibility of Count Berchtold's resignation from St. Petersburg.]

No. 15.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir C. Hardinge.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Hardinge,

Berlin, June 11, 1909.

. . . .⁽²⁾ *The Royal meeting at Reval.* The papers are still very busy claiming, as you put it, the honour of not having issued the invitation. Personally I have no doubt, as I have told you, that the invitation was originally, before the Article 25 business, given by the Czar and the only question is, who played the chief rôle in clinching it? On this subject I have heard a curious story which is new to me, tho' not perhaps to you. M. Roels, the able and well informed correspondent of the 'Temps' here, told de Salis this morning (saying that he would put his hand in the fire that his statement was true) that he had it "on the best authority" that it was Isvolsky himself who engineered the whole of the so-called Russo-German incident; that he, in fact, got the German Government to intervene and force his hand and that he did this to avoid any damaging revelations respecting his 'tripotages' at Buchlau.⁽³⁾ Further that it was in continuance of this order of

⁽¹⁾ [Hardinge MSS., Vol. I of 1909.]

⁽²⁾ [The first part of this letter refers to the Cretan question and the relations between Spain and Germany as regards Morocco. The meeting of the German Emperor and the Czar, to which the paragraph here printed refers, took place in Finnish waters on June 18. v. G.P., XXVI, pp. 822-8.]

⁽³⁾ [cp. the conversation between M. Isvolski and Sir F. Cartwright in September 1909, Gooch & Temperley, Vol. V, pp. 807-9, No. 870.]

ideas that he suggested here that the Emperor should remind the Czar of the invitation given last January. Ruels is sure to have told Cambon this story, but as the latter has not mentioned it to me, I have not said anything to him about it. But he told me that Ruels had informed him that it was Isvolsky who had made the suggestion that the Czar should be reminded of his invitation, and that he had promptly gone to the Russian Chargé d'Affaires and asked whether it was true. Boulatzell had answered that it *was* true—more or less. I wonder whether there is any truth in the first part of Ruels' story! It seems almost too bad to be believed; *but*—I can't get it out of my mind that I heard long ago in Vienna, also on very good authority, that Aehrenthal held an incriminating protocol of his conversation with Isvolsky at Buchlau, and Bülow has frequently told me the same thing. This I think I believe, but I should think it very doubtful whether Isvolsky chose the way indicated out of the dilemma in which his tortuous policy placed him. Let us hope he did not at all events.

Yours very sincerely,
W. E. GOSCHEN.

MINUTE.

If Isvolsky did engineer the German threat at St. Petersburg he has compromised himself at Berlin as well as at Vienna.

E. G.

No. 16.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir C. Hardinge.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Hardinge,

Vienna, June 24, 1909.

I learn on the best authority that here they are not satisfied with the results of the Björkö meeting.⁽²⁾ The officials of the Foreign Office did not expect very much from it and as none of the hopes entertained by them have been realized they are all the more disappointed. It seems clear that Isvolsky is likely to stay in office for some time to come and that he retains his rancour against Aehrenthal in full vigour, and it is also acknowledged at the "Ballplatz" that the anti-Austrian current existing in St. Petersburg is so strong that neither the Kaiser nor Herr von Schoen in their respective conversations with the Czar and Isvolsky found it possible to say a good word for Austria-Hungary. The political situation in Europe remains therefore unchanged by the recent Imperial interview.

The negative results of Germany's attempts for bringing about a "rapprochement" between this country and Russia have produced some ill-humour at the "Ballplatz," and have increased Baron von Aehrenthal's desire for the mediation of France and England at St. Petersburg to put an end to the tension between Austria-Hungary and Russia which, if allowed to continue much longer, is likely to lead to very serious results. Aehrenthal is away in the country; he came back two days ago to see the Emperor and to report to him upon the situation. He has again left Vienna for the country without my being able to see him, but Dr. Szepe, the editor of the "Fremdenblatt," who has just had an interview with him, came to me yesterday

⁽¹⁾ [Hardinge MSS., Vol. I of 1909.]

⁽²⁾ [The meeting between the German Emperor and the Czar took place on June 17-18. *cp. G.P. XXVI*, II, pp. 822-8; *Ö.-U.A.*, II, pp. 370-3, 379-80, Nos. 1651-3, 1660; and *Siebert-Benckendorff*, I, pp. 121-5.]

afternoon, probably sent by Aehrenthal. He confirmed what I have just said above and told me some things which it may be worth reporting to you. He informed me that Aehrenthal was desirous of meeting Clemenceau, and I suspect that Crozier, who left a few days ago for Paris, will try and arrange a meeting at Karlsbad in August. Evidently what Aehrenthal desires is to lay matters clearly before the French Premier and to make him understand that it is not in the interest of France, who desires the maintenance of European peace, to see a senseless irritation kept up between Russia and this country which can only lead to one result if allowed to continue too long—war. Dr. Szeps said that many of the officials at the "Ballplatz" were somewhat nervous about Aehrenthal's idea of meeting Clemenceau, because in their opinion though much good might come of this interview, yet it might end in a "fracas" which would render the political outlook worse than ever. Aehrenthal's one desire at present is to avoid being dragged into hopeless servitude to Germany, and it seems to me that we ought to be very careful not to encourage any policy which will drive Austria into a far closer alliance with Germany than is the case at present. If Isvolsky continues to fan the anti-Austrian current in St. Petersburg he will gain no positive advantage by it for his country in the Balkans, but will compel Austria to enter into so close a military protective Convention with Germany on one side and with Roumania on the other, that Russia will find an unsurmountable barrier erected between herself and the Balkan States. Will Russia be able to depend upon the support of France if she drifts into a war simply to revenge the rebuff she has received during the Bosnian crisis? From our own point of view it seems to me to be to our advantage to prevent so close a union between Austria-Hungary and Germany as would enable those two Powers sooner or later to exert a predominant influence at Constantinople. The Archduke Franz Ferdinand is going next month to spend a week at the Roumanian Court, and the King of Roumania is expected at Ischl during the summer, and it may well be assumed that Aehrenthal will see that the identity of interests between Roumania and Austria-Hungary will be brought out at these meetings.

The present summer will be an interesting and an important one; we are reaching the parting of the ways: either Austria-Hungary binds herself for many years to come to Germany by some secret engagement, or by the efforts of France and England she may be kept in a semi-independent state in Europe which in a critical moment may yet prove of supreme importance to ourselves. We cannot blame her for looking after her own interests and she must either come to terms with Russia or lean absolutely on Germany. Much is still expected here from the impending visits of the Czar to England and France; it is hoped that on these occasions the influence of the two Western Powers will be used to put an end to what is considered here to be the sulking humour of Russia. It is hardly thought probable that the reconciliation, if it is to take place, will be so rapid as to allow of the Czar visiting the Emperor Franz Joseph this summer, but if the Czar visits Italy and Greece and avoids passing through Austria on his return journey, Dr. Szeps tells me that it will be considered here as a sign that Isvolsky will have nothing to do with the Dual Monarchy and that consequently Austria-Hungary will be driven to make her arrangements with Germany for her future protection.

I am personally inclined to believe that the friction between Russia and Austria-Hungary will not end tragically but that at the last moment Russia will collapse as she has done before and come to terms with Vienna. A few months after the drawing up of the Reichstadt Agreement in the summer of 1876, the relations between Austria and Russia were so strained that war between them was openly talked of as a probability. Prince Gortchakoff sounded Prince Bismarck as to his attitude should this happen, and on receiving an unsatisfactory reply, gave in to the exigencies of Count Andrassy and renewed direct negotiations with the Vienna Cabinet. I have many reasons for believing that Aehrenthal, who knows the past history of the relations between Russia and Austria-Hungary well, is convinced that by force of circumstances Russia will come to terms with Austria about the Balkans, and this

before long, especially if complications arise in them through the collapse of the new "régime" at Constantinople. . . .⁽³⁾

Yours truly,
FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

MINUTE

I should certainly welcome better relations between Russia and Austria, but for us to mediate between those two Powers would probably end in our gaining the thanks of neither of them and in our action being resented in Germany as an intrigue to isolate her. We do not however want to be on bad terms with Austria and it is desirable to be as civil to her as we can be without entangling ourselves.

E. G.

⁽³⁾ [The last part of this letter refers to Count Mensdorff's probable removal from London, and King Edward's possible visits to Marienbad and Ischl. Reference to the latter subject is made in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, pp. 799-801, Nos. 861-3, and p. 804, No. 868.]

No. 17.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/777.

25095/25095/09/44A.

Tel. (No. 141.) Confidential.

Vienna, July 4, 1909.

D. 7.10 P.M.

R. 9 P.M.

I learn from a trustworthy source that the following is substance of report made by the German Ambassador here to the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs respecting recent meeting between the Czar and German Emperor.

The German Emperor avoided talking on political questions to the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, restricting his conversation to matters of no importance. In talking to Stolypin, German Emperor alluded superficially to political issues; to the Czar he spoke more on them. The ground was found too unfavourable to allow of much being said in favour of Austria-Hungary. German report adds that Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs in talking to Schoen expressed himself in violent terms against Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and he accused him of meditating new trouble in the Balkans.

On my observing to my informant that Germany painted the picture rather too black, he replied that the reports received from the Austrian Ambassador at St. Petersburg tended to confirm the belief of ill-humour of Russia towards this country.

MINUTE.

It is to the interest of Germany to exaggerate the ill-feeling of Russia and B[ar]on Aehrenthal must realize this.

L. M.
C. H.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Berlin (as No. 239): to St. Petersburg (as No. 822).]

Mr. Findlay to Sir Edward Grey

F.O. 371/606.

26135/26135/09/7.

(No. 57.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sofia, D. July 7, 1909.

R. July 12, 1909.

Since the return from Petersburg of Monsieur Sementowski-Kourilo, Russian Minister in Sofia, I have had two long conversations with him. M. Sementowski strikes me as being a very capable, and clear-headed diplomatist. He talks well, and with obvious pleasure to himself. I understand that his recent journey to Petersburg was undertaken with the express object of submitting his views as to the situation in the Near East to the Emperor and to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and that he has had ample opportunities of doing so.

I therefore venture to submit a summary of Monsieur Sementowski's opinions as to the political situation.

1. Monsieur Sementowski is very sceptical as to the stability of the present Régime in Turkey, and fears that any serious disturbance in Turkey would at once create a most dangerous state of unrest among the Balkan States. He believes the Bulgarian Government, and Bulgarian popular opinion generally, to be at present in favour of cultivating the best possible relations with Turkey. He thinks that the actual Turkish Government are prepared to welcome Bulgarian advances. For the moment Bulgarians and Turks have a common object, viz.: the diminution of Greek influence in Macedonia. The Bulgarians hope, with the assistance of the Turks, to regain, at the expense of the Greeks, some of the prestige they have lost in the Macedonian Vilayets. The Greeks being at present the most dangerous element, the Turks wish to use the Bulgarians as an instrument against them. It is clear therefore that though the primary object of both Turks and Bulgarians is the same, their ultimate objects are entirely different. The Turks are obviously, and naturally, attempting to divide and rule. The Bulgarians are aiming at the gradual acquisition of a predominant position in Macedonia at the expense, not only of the other Christian Nationalities, but also of the Turks. Monsieur Sementowski concludes that, until the Macedonian question is ultimately solved, there can be no lasting entente between Bulgaria and Turkey.

2. Monsieur Sementowski appears to be extremely nervous as to Austrian designs on the Western portion of the Balkan Peninsula. Austria, he said, having begun her advance, would find herself forced by circumstances to continue it. Any serious disturbances in the neighbouring provinces of Turkey would probably compel Austria to reoccupy the Sandjak of Novi-bazar, and that would be the first step to an advance on Salonica. German influence would undoubtedly be exerted in order to induce Austria to act as the pioneer of Germanism in the South, the more so that any intervention in the Balkans would render the Dual Monarchy dependent on German support, and consequently more subservient to German policy elsewhere.

While admitting that there might be a good deal in what Monsieur Sementowski said, I told him that the impressions I had gathered during the few days I had recently spent in Vienna on my way to Sofia did not lead me to anticipate any desire on the part of Austria to embark, in the near future, on a policy of adventure in the Balkans. I had seen many old friends, and I had been much impressed by the sense of relief expressed by all classes at having escaped from the dangers of War. I was convinced that any fresh policy of adventure would be most unpopular, and Baron von Aehrenthal being,—whatever we might think of his methods,—a man of undoubted intelligence, must be well aware of the fact. He had brought off his coup, but at a risk which was out of proportion to the result attained. There was always among the German and the Magyar elements in Austria and in Hungary a strong party who would be absolutely opposed to any action which might, by the addition of several million Slavs to the existing Slav population of the Dual Monarchy,

tend to the extinction of the German and Magyar predominance, which was already seriously threatened.

I had further been impressed by the fact that Austrians had awoke [*sic*] to the knowledge of their own strength as a military power. The self-reliance engendered by this feeling would almost certainly tend to make Austria less subservient to Germany than they had been hitherto.

As regards Austrian gratitude for German support which Monsieur Sementowski had spoken of as being a factor to be reckoned with in the future, Baron von Aehrenthal had not appeared to be encumbered by sentimental scruples—'Dank von Hause Oesterreich' had passed into a proverb—German policy had been dictated by German interests and by the fear of losing their 'only friend'—Austrians were well aware of this—.

Finally I believed the Emperor Francis Joseph to be a man of peace. His Imperial Majesty had expressed himself in conversation with Sir Fairfax Cartwright as being determined to make every effort to maintain tranquillity in the Balkans. The Emperor was not a strong sovereign, and the influence of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand had to be reckoned with, but I could not doubt that His Imperial Majesty meant what he had said, and would endeavour to act up to it.

Monsieur Sementowski agreed that the Emperor had probably always been on the side of peace. His Imperial Majesty has been forced into a position which was disagreeable to him, and from which he could not escape. He would naturally take the first opportunity to revert to his characteristically peaceful policy. While admitting the force of much which I had told him, Monsieur Sementowski still seemed to think that circumstances might be too strong for Austria, and that she might again disturb the Status Quo at no distant date.

3. In discussing the future policy of King Ferdinand, Monsieur Sementowski expressed the fear that if Austria offered to give His Majesty a large slice of Macedonia, in return for co-operation in an Austrian advance on Salonica, he might be tempted to swallow the bait. No partition of Turkey which gave the Eastern portion of the Balkan Peninsula to Austria would commend itself to the Bulgarians, who were much too shrewd to desire a powerful military Empire as a neighbour. They would much prefer to wait.—By agreeing to a partition by which Bulgaria would probably only get a part of what she regarded as her inheritance, King Ferdinand would incur such unpopularity as to endanger his throne. His Majesty's Vanity and Megalomania were, however, so great that he might be tempted to take the risk. Under certain circumstances.—such as a breakdown of the actual Régime in Turkey,—Monsieur Sementowski considered that such an offer might quite possibly be made to His Majesty by Austria.

4. It is probable that Monsieur Sementowski submitted these or similar views to his Government. I gathered from him that he had long audiences of the Emperor and Empress, and that he had done his utmost to impress on their Majesties his opinion that the Bulgarians are undoubtedly the strongest nationality in the Balkans; that they possess sterling qualities which are a guarantee for the future of their race, and that it is consequently advisable for Russia to support them in order to maintain her prestige among the southern Slavs.

I have, &c.

M. DE C. FINDLAY.

No. 19.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir C. Hardinge.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Hardinge,

Vienna, July 9, 1909.

The visit of the King to Marienbad appears to be now definitely decided upon, and the newspapers announce this to their readers with great satisfaction. I cannot

⁽¹⁾ [Hardinge MSS., Vol. I of 1909.]

tell how much anxiety has been felt in all circles here over this matter, and how—on all sides—the desire has been impressed upon me that His Majesty should not this year abandon the customary visit to the Bohemian watering place. But the prospective visit of His Majesty to Marienbad only half satisfies the general feeling here; what Austrians of all classes hope for is to see a meeting this year between the King and the Emperor Franz Joseph. I have tried to explain to you the matter in a private telegram of the 4th instant,⁽²⁾ but will now go over this question again more fully.

Austria-Hungary has passed through a violent crisis this winter and feels now like a convalescent desirous of some consolation. From Germany she gets none but at every turn that Power makes use of inconsiderate pressure and never shows any soothing ways towards these people; she is the custodian, not the friend of Austria, and in spite of the official demonstrations of friendship which she receives from this country, there is at heart a strong resentment here against the Northern Ally. Aehrenthal has learnt a great deal in the past six months; he has learnt that there are resistances in Europe which he did not count with; by his hasty and adventurous policy in the Balkans he brought the Dual Monarchy into the undesirable position of finding that her relations were strained with every nation in Europe, and that they were not even on the best footing with Germany. He and the intelligent public here want to change all this for it is necessary that Austria-Hungary should be on good terms with the Western Powers and with Russia if the Balkan problems which are likely soon to arise are to be solved in a manner which will not lead to a universal war. As I have often said before, the official world here is most anxious that Austria-Hungary should draw closer to France and England with a view to their taking common action in the Balkans. There is no desire to exclude Russia from having her due share of influence in that part of Europe, and it is genuinely believed here that if England, France and Austria-Hungary come to an agreement upon the main lines of treating the problems in the Balkans, Russia will sooner or later join hands with them. As for Germany it is thought that in that case she will follow the other Powers, though perhaps in a grumbling spirit. What Austria-Hungary dreads at present is to find herself separated from England, France, Italy and Russia, and compelled to follow in the Balkans a policy entirely dictated from Berlin, and conceived solely for the purpose of furthering German interests in the Near East.

The depression caused her by the late crisis is only very gradually passing away, and in spite of apparent better relations between ourselves and this country, a general doubt still seems to exist whether England in reality does not harbour a resentment against Baron von Aehrenthal and the Dual Monarchy which at any moment may break out visibly and cause much worry and anxiety to this Empire. It is to settle this moot point that so universally [*sic*] a desire is expressed here that the King should go to Ischl; his doing so will bring home to every mind in Austria that His Majesty has forgiven and forgotten all the friction of the last few months, and that he is willing and disposed to show again that England has returned to her traditional friendship for the Hapsburg Monarchy. The conferring of the Order of St. Stephen upon Monsieur Fallières is intended to be a sign of the ardent desire which exists here to entertain the closest and most friendly relations with France, and it is hoped that this may also be the case with England. I do not think that it is either desirable or possible to draw away Austria-Hungary from her alliance with Germany, but we may succeed by rendering little services and by showing proofs of friendship to her to lay little ties between Austria-Hungary, ourselves, France and Italy, and perhaps finally Russia, which, in a critical moment, may counteract the great pull from Berlin, and, paralysing Austria-Hungary, cause her to hesitate taking sides in a great European struggle until the issue has been practically decided. . . .⁽³⁾

Yours truly,

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

(2) [Not reproduced, as it cannot be traced.]

(3) [The final paragraph refers briefly to the possibility of a meeting between King Edward and the Emperor Francis Joseph, but adds nothing to the information already given.]

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir C. Hardinge.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Hardinge,

Vienna, July 9, 1909.

Bourchier, the "Times" correspondent in the Balkans, passed through Vienna last week, and through Steed, the "Times" correspondent here, who saw him, I have obtained a curious view of the history of the proclamation of the independence of Bulgaria.⁽²⁾ In the first days of October Aehrenthal had decided to go through promptly with the annexation business. The reasons for this decision are not quite clear, but on Friday afternoon, October 2nd, the Italian Ambassador—who was at Budapest—got wind of Aehrenthal's intention, and he immediately took the train for Vienna and went straight through to Italy to see Tittoni. He saw him on the Sunday and started back for Vienna that night. Goschen did not hear of the news so quickly, and when he saw Aehrenthal on the Saturday, the 3d, he did not put to him any question with regard to the annexation of Bosnia, to Aehrenthal's great relief, and merely carried out his instructions to enquire whether the Austro-Hungarian Government had reasons to believe that the Bulgarian Government were contemplating the immediate proclamation of the independence of their country. Aehrenthal, as is well known, replied in the negative. The difficulty for history to decide is whether he was speaking the truth at that moment or not. It has always seemed to me incredible that Aehrenthal, who is no fool, should have declared positively to a foreign Ambassador that he did not believe in a Bulgarian proclamation of independence if he knew that it would take place in a few days' time. What could he gain by doing so, except to obtain for himself the damaging reputation of being a barefaced liar or of being an idiot? Bourchier believes that Aehrenthal was in fact innocent of an intention to deceive, for he has reason to believe that Prince Ferdinand reached Rustchuck on Sunday evening, October 4th, fully determined to put off the declaration of independence until a further date, and there is every ground for supposing that Aehrenthal was aware of the Prince's decision: in fact, the annexation was to precede the declaration of independence and not to follow it, and it was not to take place, according to Aehrenthal's plan, until the replies had been received to the Emperor's letters to the Sovereigns. Andrassy told a friend that something unexplained forced on the declaration of annexation which was communicated to the Delegations only on the eve of the proclamation.

To return to Prince Ferdinand: Bourchier says that the Prince met at Rustchuck the entire Bulgarian Cabinet, and that a long discussion took place on the question of the immediate proclamation of the independence of the Principality. The Prince strongly opposed this step being taken at that moment, and he only gave way in the early hours of the morning when the special train conveying him and his Ministers made for Tirnovo instead of for Sofia. Bourchier explains the insistence [*sic*] of the Ministers by what appear to me to be somewhat puerile reasons on their part, but still they may have been inspired by them. The grounds on which they seem to have acted appear to be the following:—there had been, as you know, great irritation in Bulgaria at the way in which the Oriental Railway Co. sacrificed the needs of local to those of international traffic. To gain popularity the Government instigated a strike on the line which was followed by its military occupation, and the spreading of a report which was welcomed all round that the Bulgarian nation would in future enjoy the exploitation of the railway without having to pay any compensation for it. Then followed the unexpected and energetic protest of the Powers. The Ministry found themselves in a hole and saw themselves compelled to restore the railway to its owners, or to pay compensation for it. To raise a loan for this purpose would have been most unpopular in the country. Bourchier says that in their dilemma the idea

⁽¹⁾ [Hardinge MSS., Vol. I of 1909.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 776–9, *App. III*, where a statement by Mr. Wickham Steed is printed.]

occurred to some of the Ministers that if they hurried on the declaration of independence of Bulgaria, no one could dispute the right of an independent State to do what it liked with the railways in its territory, and that Bulgaria, once rid of her tributary condition, the Powers could no longer appeal to Turkey to put more than diplomatic pressure on the Bulgarian Government for a settlement of the railway dispute. This reasoning seems finally to have carried the day at Rustchuck, and if this version is fairly correct, it would exonerate Aehrenthal of having told a deliberate lie to Goschen, for he had arranged with Prince Ferdinand that the declaration of the independence should be delayed for the moment.

There remains however unexplained the so-called "Khevenhüller statement" reputed to have been made in answer to a question put to him by Fallières that "to-day we shall annex Bosnia, and to-morrow Bulgaria will declare her independence." Did Khevenhüller make this statement deliberately and on information in his possession? that is the question. Now Khevenhüller is a man who is greatly given to inconsiderate talk and he may merely have meant that the annexation of Bosnia and the declaration of independence of Bulgaria were events which would follow each other in rapid succession without having the intention of fixing the precise dates when these should occur. Usuroff, the Russian Ambassador here, who saw Aehrenthal immediately after the news of the declaration of Bulgaria's independence reached Vienna, found him very much upset by it, and although it is possible that he was only playing a comedy, still Usuroff is inclined to believe that Aehrenthal was genuine in his expressions of disgust at the conduct of Prince Ferdinand.

I have heard on very good authority that the copies of the proclamation of annexation had been printed bearing a date posterior to the 20th of October, and that the corrected copies had to be reprinted in a terrible hurry to get them out by the morning of the 7th. It all looks as if the annexation had not been contemplated for so early a date, and only intended to be carried out after the replies had been received to the Imperial Letters addressed to the European Courts. Zichy, who headed the Hungarian Delegation, has told me that on the evening of the 6th, Tuesday, he was approached with a view to his making some allusion to the Provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina in his speech. He made some objections to do this, and he was then informed that it had been suddenly decided upon to proclaim the annexation of the two Provinces on the following morning, and that he must make some allusion to them so as to give a natural opening to the Crown to announce their annexation. All this would tend to show that the annexation was precipitated by the unexpected declaration of independence of Bulgaria, and that Aehrenthal had been as much deceived by Prince Ferdinand as the rest of the world.

As to the close working together between Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria during the late crisis, I have received a small piece of information which is not without interest. Professor Marczali, professor of history at the University of Pesth, says that at the height of the crisis, when war was imminent, he enquired of a General who was to have the command of a Brigade operating in Servia, how long the war was likely to last. The General replied that the Austro-Hungarian forces would be at Nish in from two to three weeks' time. The professor expressed some astonishment as to this somewhat sanguine view of the case; the General replied, however, that the General Staff had made their calculations very carefully and that they had compared information in their possession with that in the hands of the Bulgarians, and that the two informations tallied absolutely.

Yours truly,

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

A most interesting letter with most remarkable information.

E.R

Sir Edward Grey to Mr O'Beirne.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear O'Beirne,

Foreign Office, July 9, 1909.

Poklevski came to take leave of me to-day.

I expressed my satisfaction that he was going to Tehran, and my regret that he was leaving us. I told him that ever since Hartwig left Tehran the present Russian Representative there had acted very loyally towards us, and we had no complaint to make, all the same, I was glad that Poklevski was going to such a delicate post, because he knew our views at first hand.

I then spoke very frankly to him about the complications which must arise from the presence of Russian troops in Persia. The troops would no doubt maintain the Russian position and influence in the particular places where they happened to be located, but the rest of Persia would disown those places. The southern part of Persia, for instance, might break away altogether from Tehran; while the Turks, on the western side, would certainly not withdraw, and would probably interfere still farther. It was for these reasons that I had so strongly urged the Russians not to send troops into Persia.

The difficulties of the Russians were, I knew, great. I could not even say with certainty that, had there been a precisely similar state of things close to the Indian frontier, we ourselves would not have sent troops. I realised that if, for instance, our Officers had for years been instructing the Ameer's forces at Kabul; if we had used Indian Government money to make into Afghanistan a road on which British trade depended; if we had a Bank in Kabul with a large deposit; and if a large number of disaffected and very hostile people from India had gone into Afghanistan and were endeavouring to bring about a revolution there: it was quite certain that great pressure would be brought upon us to act in the same way as the Russians were acting in the case of Persia. This, however, would not necessarily make it a wise step to send troops.—As a matter of fact, I thought it would have been better had the Russians left Persian affairs entirely alone: allowed a general upheaval to take place, and after about six months or so again entered into communication with Persia, and got into touch with whatever had come uppermost there. I wished Iswolsky to understand clearly, however, that though I might some times differ from his opinions in the course of our discussions, as to what it was wise to do in Persia, this difference did not mean that I wished to part company.

Poklevski asked me whether I thought it would be possible, if the present Government in Persia were upset, for us to come to some arrangement with the new Government there, on terms which would include the recognition of the Anglo-Russian Convention?

I told him that I thought such an arrangement might quite easily have been made had we allowed the present Government to be overthrown; for the new Government would have been anxious for recognition, and greatly in need of money, and we might well have made the acceptance of the Anglo-Russian Convention a condition of our recognition and financial help.

Poklevski also asked whether, when the Russian troops were withdrawn from Persia, we should be willing to bring pressure to bear on the Turkish Government to agree to a delimitation of the Turco-Persian frontier?

I said that certainly, when the Russian troops were withdrawn, we should speak most strongly at Constantinople; urging upon the Turks that, as Russia and England—with all their commercial interests at stake—were observing a policy of non-intervention with regard to Persia, Turkey must act in the same way. Further, I would point out to the Turks that, if they refused to do this, they would transform the intention of respecting the integrity and independence of Persia—expressed in the

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

preamble of the Anglo-Russian Convention—into determined action on the part of both England and Russia to uphold that integrity and delimitation of the Turco-Persian frontier.

But I urged upon Poklevski the fact that the further the Russians advanced into Persia, the more difficult they would find it to withdraw. He spoke of a withdrawal after two or three months, and I reminded him that Mr. Gladstone's intention had been precisely the same with regard to Egypt; but though this had been not only his intention, but also his earnest desire, it had been impossible to carry it out, and we had drifted into an occupation of Egypt. This was why we regarded the Russian intervention in Persia with so much doubt.

Poklevski also spoke about railways. He wished to know whether, if some two years hence the Russians made railways from the north through Persia, we should be prepared to join up railways from the Indian side.

I said that the good understanding between us would have to be confirmed by some years of confidence before the Indian Government would be likely to consider through railway communication to India without the apprehension that it would entail an increase of our Indian frontier force. There would, however, be no objection to joint railway communication from Russian territory to the Persian Gulf. But, in this connection, the Russians ought to make up their minds as to their policy with regard to the Bagdad Railway.⁽²⁾ This Railway would certainly be built. The Germans professed themselves ready to come to some terms with us, but they were unwilling to discuss the subject "à quatre," with Russia and France as well as with us. The Russians themselves had not, so far, shown much desire to come into the enterprise. Meanwhile, we had told the Germans that we could discuss the subject only "à quatre."

Poklevski wished to know whether, if the Germans went on building the Railway by themselves, this would cause an open breach between us and the Germans when the Railway drew near to the sea.

I told him I could not say what would happen, but there would be a great deal of friction between us and the Germans at Constantinople if no arrangement was come to about the Bagdad Railway; for the construction of the Railway under the control of a single foreign Power would practically mean the exclusion of the British trade which now went into Mesopotamia.

Poklevski's idea seemed to be that the Russians would be disposed to agree to some terms, which included the recognition by Germany of the Anglo-Russian Convention, and a provision that no connection should be made between the Bagdad Railway and Persian territory without Russian consent.

He asked me whether there were any subjects about which I wished to speak specially to Iswolsky at Cowes.⁽³⁾

I said that of course Persia would be the main subject of discussion, but we might also perhaps review the history of the recent difficulties in the Near East. It seemed to me that the mistake Russia had made in connection with the Near East was to raise the hopes of Servia and Montenegro, and then to disappoint them. In substance, Russia had had a diplomatic success, for the beginning of the difficulties saw Bulgaria in the Austrian boat, but the end of them showed her in the Russian boat; and Bulgaria was worth all the other Balkan States put together. In form, however, Russia had received a diplomatic check, owing to the disappointment of Servia and Montenegro. Perhaps it was impossible, at the beginning, not to hold out hopes to them; but had it not been for these hopes Russia would have had a success in substance, without any appearance of failure.

We spoke a little about the visit of the Members of the Duma; it has been a great success.

⁽²⁾ [For the question of the Bagdad Railway at this period *v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. VI, pp. 325-433, Chapter XLVI, *passim*.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. infra*, p. 32, *Ed. note*; pp. 33-5, No. 29; pp. 38-41, No. 33.]

Poklevski dwelt upon the feeling which had been aroused in Russia by the German action at St. Petersburg during the Near Eastern difficulties.

I told him I did not think the Austrians were particularly grateful for the German action at St. Petersburg, and would probably like to get on to better terms with Russia. But the Austrians had made this very difficult for themselves.

Poklevski said he quite understood that the Austrians did not desire to owe too much to the Germans; but he was not hopeful of any improvement of the relations between Russia and Austria as long as Baron Aehrenthal remained at the Austrian Foreign Office.

He also told me that Mr. Balfour had lately said to him that even those who had originally disliked the Anglo-Russian Convention were coming round to it. Balfour himself, though regarding it as a disadvantageous bargain commercially, supported it in the interest of good relations between England and Russia, to which he attached much importance.

I observed that it was important that Russia should not make it a bad bargain for us commercially and that later on she might find an opportunity of helping an alteration of the Persian Customs Tariff, not to give British trade undue advantages, but to remove the unfair disadvantages to us of the present Tariff.

Poklevski said he thought this had already been done, but I said according to the reports I received this was not so.

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

No. 22.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/758.

27020/26/09/44A.

(No. 429.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. July 13, 1909.

R. July 19, 1909.

Sir,

I asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday whether he thought that there was any foundation for rumours which have lately made their appearance in the Russian press, to the effect that a military convention was in contemplation between Bulgaria and Austria. His Excellency replied that he was always suspicious of the designs of the King of the Bulgarians. I said I had understood that the Russian Government had been quite satisfied with the attitude of the King on the occasion of His Majesty's visit to St. Petersburg last February. Monsieur Iswolsky answered that His Majesty certainly had reason to be thankful to Russia for the action taken by her on that occasion but that he never expected gratitude in matters of this sort.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs then went on to say that the whole attitude of Austria-Hungary in regard to the Balkans question continued to cause him anxiety. I asked whether he had any tangible indications that the Austro-Hungarian Government were not sincere in declaring, as they had recently done, that the settlement arrived at in connection with the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was quite satisfactory to them and that they desired no further change in the *status quo*. Monsieur Iswolsky replied that there were the Austrian intrigues in Albania, there were anti-dynastic intrigues in Servia, there were the constant efforts of Austrian diplomacy to foment disagreements between Servia and Bulgaria. Moreover, the appointment of General Geissler*⁽¹⁾ to the Austro-Hungarian Legation in Montenegro seemed to indicate that Austrian diplomacy was preparing to exercise its activities in the Principality with more energy than heretofore. His Excellency added that if hostilities should break

*I am not certain of having correctly caught the General's name. H. O'B.

⁽¹⁾ [The correct name was Giesl.]

out between Turkey and Greece, Russia would do her utmost to restrain Bulgaria from joining in the conflict by invading Macedonia, but he was not at all sure that Baron d'Aehrenthal would not pursue precisely the opposite policy.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

No. 23.

Memorandum communicated by Count Benckendorff

F.O. 371/758.

27905/26/09/44.

July 23, 1909.

Au sujet de la demande du Gouvernement Turc de modifier l'article 29 du traité de Berlin, nous nous sommes arrêtés à un projet de note responsive à la Sublime Porte que nous soumettons à l'appréciation des Cabinets de Londres, Paris et Rome, auxquels nous avons préalablement demandé leur avis: voici ce projet:

"L'Ambassadeur Ottoman par sa dernière communication en notifiant le consentement de la Sublime Porte à l'abrogation des alinéas 5-11 de l'article 29 du traité de Berlin⁽¹⁾ a transmis le désir du Gouvernement Ottoman que simultanément la première partie de l'alinéa 4 du même article soit modifiée de façon à limiter à la marine marchande la liberté de navigation du Monténégro sur la Boyana, à l'exclusion de tout bâtiment de guerre et que la seconde partie du même alinéa soit abrogée purement et simplement. Le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères se fait un devoir d'informer l'Ambassadeur qu'il n'a pas d'objections de principe contre la première des propositions Ottomanes à condition toutefois que la limitation de la liberté de navigation sur la Boyana soit étendue à toutes les nations. Il est à noter en même temps que les Puissances, si elles tombaient d'accord sur ce point, devraient sanctionner le nouveau texte de la phrase en question par un traité spécial, à l'instar de ce qui a été fait à la Conférence de 1871. Quant à la seconde proposition turque, le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères pense que la suppression pure et simple de la seconde partie de l'alinéa 4 de l'article 29 modifierait le régime actuel en ouvrant la possibilité de fortifier les deux rives de la Boyana et pourrait ainsi rendre précaire la liberté de navigation sur ce fleuve, assurée par le traité de Berlin,—ce qui serait en contradiction évidente avec l'esprit général de ce traité. C'est pour quoi le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, désireux de faire preuve de ses dispositions sincèrement amicales envers la Turquie, donne son consentement à l'abrogation de la seconde phrase de l'alinéa 4, mais d'autre part ne pouvant méconnaître l'importance de conserver au traité de Berlin son caractère fondamental il croit de son devoir de subordonner ce consentement à l'échange préalable par les Gouvernements Turc et Monténégrin de déclarations identiques portant qu'il ne sera pas construit de fortifications sur le parcours de la Boyana. Ces déclarations seraient notifiées par la Turquie et le Monténégro aux Puissances signataires du traité de Berlin."

Nous aimerions savoir si le Cabinet de Londres considérerait possible de donner à l'Ambassadeur de Turquie une réponse analogue.

MINUTES.

It will require some skill to treat this question without offending somebody.

The suppression of alinea 5 of Art[icle] 29 has modified the situation to the disadvantage of Turkey, since previously Turkish warships had the right to navigate the Boyana, while Montenegro had no warships but had the right of navigation for her merchant vessels. Now that Montenegro may have warships (although it is extremely doubtful whether she ever can afford to have any) the situation is modified to the disadvantage to [sic: of] Turkey since Montenegro, like Turkey, can send warships into the lake of Scutari, of which about half the shore is Montenegrin. The

⁽¹⁾ [References to the long discussions on this subject will be found in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V. v. Subject Index, sub TREATIES, &c., *Treaty of Berlin*.]

Turkish Gov[ernment] wish therefore to restore the status quo by defining the right of Montenegro to freely navigate the Boyana as limited to merchant vessels, while the Russian Gov[ernment] now propose that the right to navigate the Boyana should be limited to the merchant vessels of both Turkey and Montenegro. This would be to take from Turkey a right that she has long enjoyed of sending warships into the Lake of Scutari.

We have invariably held during the negotiations of last winter, in matters affecting the interests of Turkey in Bosnia and Bulgaria, that we could not press upon the Turkish Gov[ernment] the acceptance of terms which would be to the disadvantage of Turkey, and I think that as regards the Russian proposal to limit the navigation of the Boyana to the merchant vessels of all Powers we should reply to the Russian note in the same sense and maintain the fairness of the Turkish attitude and demand.

The question of the suppression of the latter part of alinea 4 relating to fortifications is, I think, in a different category. I fail to see that Turkey is injuriously affected by its maintenance while alinea 7 is abolished, and although we should not press for modifications to the disadvantage of Turkey, I see no reason for pressing for alterations in her special favour. We know that the Turks will never accept the Russian proposal put forward in this note, and I think we may safely say as regards this question that we will accept any proposal upon which *all* the Powers interested are agreed. While we know that Austria has already agreed to the abolition of the second part of alinea 4 we can safely assume that no agreement will ever be arrived at, in which case the latter part of alinea 4 will be maintained and we shall not have hurt the feelings of the Turks by sending them a reply, which is tantamount to a refusal of their demand. The Russians should equally be satisfied with this solution since the latter part of alinea 4 will remain which is what the Montenegrins want.

C. H.

Let us take the line suggested⁽²⁾ and refuse to press anything disagreeable upon Turkey and let us hope that it will end in the whole thing being dropped.

E. G.

(²) [*v. infra*, pp 44-5, No. 36.]

No. 24.

Mr. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/668.

28426/28426/09/17.

(No. 29.) Very Confidential.

Berne, D. July 24, 1909.

Sir,

R. July 28, 1909.

I have the honour to report that I met Monsieur Pichon by chance at Andoulet, in the Jura, near the Swiss frontier, on the 19th instant.

His Excellency was French Minister at Peking, whilst I was acting as His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at that capital, in 1899, and at that time we saw a great deal of each other.

Monsieur Pichon, who went on to Paris that very night, asked me to dine with him, and we had a long conversation, alone, after dinner.

After recounting his experiences at the siege of Peking at some length, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs turned to European politics, concerning which he spoke with great frankness.

His relations with Sir Francis Bertie were, he stated, excellent, and the 'entente cordiale' was quite firmly established between the two countries.

The Russian Government was working hard to effect an improvement in her [*sic*] army, but, from the information he had received, he was of opinion that it would take them at least seven years to attain real military efficiency.

His Excellency stated that he was going to Paris that night in order to answer some questions that were to be asked in the Chambers [*sic*], especially respecting Greece. These questions never were asked, as on the following day the Clémenceau Cabinet fell, most unexpectedly.

Monsieur Pichon told me, however, that the Government was not in so secure a position as was generally supposed.

After touching shortly on the Greek question, concerning which he said the chief point was the unpopularity of the King, His Excellency spoke at length on the position of Italy in Europe. It was, he considered, an anomalous one as far as Italy was concerned; but not unsatisfactory as far as concerned Great Britain.

The Italian people, speaking generally, were opposed to the Triple Alliance, the Italian Government was pledged to it.

Italy, on account of her unprotected coasts, could never afford to find herself in opposition to Great Britain. As long as she continued a member of the Triple Alliance she could expect nothing from us, whereas should she secede from that alliance she would certainly expect constant help from Great Britain: therefore, from the British point of view the position of Italy was not so unsatisfactory; acting also, as she did, as a drag on the alliance: the Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me that he believed this was also your opinion.

As regards France there were certain agreements (he used the word 'arrangements')⁽¹⁾ between France and Italy, unknown to Germany (and this, he said, I tell you in great confidence) which modified considerably the official position. Unfortunately we were interrupted at this moment and I did not, on resuming the conversation, like to force his confidence as to what "arrangements" were meant.⁽²⁾

After the interruption Monsieur Pichon remarked that Germany and Austria-Hungary must, henceforward, be regarded as one Nation, and it was unnecessary to say that, at the present time, they were a standing menace to the peace of Europe.

On the question of Swiss independence M. Pichon is of opinion that the Swiss national character is as sturdy and independent as ever and he did not believe that the Swiss nation would barter their present position for any offers made them by other nationalities. I gathered, however, that he had not studied the Swiss question at first hand, his views being exactly those of the French Representative.

As regards Monsieur Pichon's personal position he confirmed what I had the honour to report in my despatch No. 26 Confidential, of the 12th instant⁽³⁾ as stated to me by Count d'Aunay, viz.: that he did not want an Embassy: he preferred to be a Senator, as now, and to remain in France. When he left office he would thoroughly enjoy a holiday, as he had only had twelve days' rest in four years. He purposed then to write a description of the siege of Peking from a diary and notes which he had in his possession.

In reply to an enquiry on my part, M. Pichon stated that he often saw M. Hanotaux, that they were friends, and that he valued his opinion.

As, according to a telegram of to-day's date from Paris, Monsieur Pichon has retained office under the new Government, his views will continue to be of interest to His Majesty's Government.

I have, &c.

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

MINUTES.

The "arrangements" between France and Italy mentioned by Mr. Bax Ironside refer no doubt to the arrangement reported by Col. Delmé Radcliffe some time back that in the event of war between France and Germany, France would immediately withdraw her troops from the Italian frontier, as she possessed an agreement with Italy that in such an event w[ould] set free all her troops on the Italian frontier. We have had this also from Paris.⁽²⁾

G. S. S.

29/7.

We may note with interest M. Pichon's remarks about Germany and Austria.

W. I.

C. H.

Mr. Bax Ironside took good advantage of his opportunity.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [Marginal comment by Sir C. Hardinge: "This we know. C. H."]

⁽²⁾ [Reference to the Franco-Italian arrangement of 1902 is made in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. VIII, p. 28, *Ed. note*. Sir F. Bertie stated in his *Annual Report* for France for the year 1907 (D. April 15, 1908, R. April 18, 1908) "I have reason to believe that there is a Secret Agreement between the Italian and French Governments, dating from about five years ago, that in the event of a German attack on France, Italy will remain neutral so that the French troops on the Italian frontier could be directed against Germany." (F.O. 371/456. 21042/21042/08/17.)]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced, as its tenour is sufficiently indicated. (F.O. 371/746. 26790/26790/09/43.)]

Mr Findlay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/606.

29827/28848/09/7.

(No. 60.) Secret.

Sir,

Sofia, D. July 28, 1909.

R. August 9, 1909.

The French and Russian Representatives are much exercised at a rapprochement which they believe to be going on between Austria and Bulgaria on the one side and between Turkey and Bulgaria on the other. They seem to think that a Triple Entente between these three Governments is in process of formation.

It appears that the French Chargé d'Affaires in Vienna telegraphed to his Government some weeks ago that King Ferdinand had paid a secret visit to Vienna; that His Majesty had been seen to enter the Palais Coburg and that he remained there for some time, during which his presence was denied; that Baron von Aehrenthal had also been seen to enter the Palais Coburg and that General Nicolaieff, Bulgarian Minister for War, was in Vienna at the same time. The conclusion drawn from these alleged facts was that a military convention, or at any rate an agreement as to parallel military action under certain circumstances had been under discussion.

The French Chargé d'Affaires in Sofia, Comte de Cherissey, discussed this report with me at the time. On enquiry he had ascertained that General Nicolaieff, who is rather a nonentity, had not left Bulgaria. Comte de Cherissey had therefore telegraphed pointing out that the facts reported by his Vienna colleague were not correct and that the conclusions drawn from the alleged secret interview between Baron von Aehrenthal and the King of the Bulgarians appeared to him somewhat far-fetched.

The Russian Chargé d'Affaires assures me that General Nicolaieff *was* in Vienna at the same time as the King and Monsieur Malinoff. Most Bulgarians do go to Vienna when they go to "Europe," and General Nicolaieff has certainly been there this summer. But Colonel Napier agrees with me in thinking it most unlikely that he would have been initiated into any political combinations, as he does not enjoy the confidence of the King and is generally regarded as being rather incapable. Any conclusions drawn from his alleged presence would therefore appear to rest on very doubtful foundation.

Since then Monsieur Paléologue, the French Minister in Sofia, has returned from leave. He seems to be imbued with the idea that in spite of the apparent calm in the political world, much is going on behind the scenes. Whether it is true or not that General Nikolaieff [sic] was in Vienna at the time of the alleged interview between the King of the Bulgarians and Baron von Aehrenthal, M. Paléologue says that General Savoff, whom he believes to have been selected as Commander in Chief of the Bulgarian forces if War had broken out last autumn, has been in Vienna. The King had also summoned Monsieur Dobrevitch, his Secretary. Monsieur Sarafoff, formerly Bulgarian Minister in Vienna had been transferred to Constantinople, and his predecessor in that Capital, Monsieur Gueshoff had been moved to Vienna, all of which seems to Monsieur Paléologue to indicate a desire to bring about a Triple understanding between Austria and Bulgaria and Turkey. He was confirmed in this belief by the fact that though the Bulgarians were obviously straining every nerve to convince the Turks that they were desirous of establishing the most cordial relations with the Ottoman Empire, the Bulgarian Ministers had not seen fit to inform the Russian Government of the projected visits of Bulgarian Officers, Merchants and Students on the occasion of the Anniversary of the Turkish Constitution. He concludes that King Ferdinand is persuaded that Russia, for some time to come, will be a negligible quantity, and that it is therefore to his interest to come to an understanding with Austria and Germany. There may [be] something in this idea. Russia has undoubtedly lost much of her prestige. A Bulgarian move on Macedonia might very possibly be checkmated by Roumania acting at the instigation of Austria.

Monsieur Paléologue argues that King Ferdinand is therefore certain to endeavour to acquire freedom of action by an understanding with Austria. King Ferdinand once said to Monsieur Paléologue: "La crainte des armées autrichiennes est pour moi le commencement de la sagesse." All this may be very true. It is also true that Bulgaria may find it difficult to maintain her army indefinitely at its present strength and to provide at the same time for armaments when required, so that there will be a strong temptation to attempt the realisation of national ideals on the occurrence of the first favourable opportunity. But I believe I am correct in saying that King Ferdinand has always shown himself constitutionally (and wisely) averse to tying his hands by any lasting engagements. His policy, and that of his Government, has always been frankly opportunist. On the other hand I have no reason to believe that in Austria sufficient confidence is felt in King Ferdinand to induce the Emperor and Baron von Aehrenthal to favour the idea of a binding Entente with Bulgaria. The conversion of Prince Boris has not been forgotten in Vienna.

Monsieur Paléologue suggests that the object of the supposed understanding might be the partition of Servia. He argues that King Ferdinand would risk his throne if he was a party to any arrangement for the partition of Macedonia. I can only say that, whatever she may be driven to do in the future, I do not believe that Austria has any present desire to add to her troubles by the permanent occupation of a part of Servia. Still less can she desire to strengthen Bulgaria by giving her a slice of Servian territory. I am quite certain that the Bulgarians would regard Pirot, Nisch, and the adjacent districts as dearly bought at the price of having the powerful Austrian Empire as a neighbour.

I have thought it necessary to report the fears entertained by the French and Russian Representatives, though I do not at present share them. They have had greater experience of Sofia than I have, and their opinion should be worth more than mine, the more so that, since my arrival, nearly every Bulgarian who is in a position to know what is going on behind the scenes, has been absent.

It seems to me, however, that the conclusions at which my colleagues have arrived are deduced from a minimum of fact and a maximum of imagination. In conclusion, I may say that the Austrian Chargé d'Affaires, Count Otto Czernin, told me yesterday that Monsieur Paléologue had spoken to him on the subject of an Entente between Turkey, Bulgaria and Austria, which he imagined to have been under discussion. Count Czernin assured me that he knew nothing of any such proposal, and that if it had been made he would certainly have known of it. He is a straight-forward young man and always speaks to me very frankly, probably because he has heard of me from the head of his family who is an old friend. I am quite certain that he would not have gone out of his way to give me this assurance if he had any suspicion that a Turco-Austro-Bulgarian Entente or any similar understanding was in the air. This confirms my doubts as to the correctness of the conclusions arrived at by my French and Russian colleagues.

I have, &c.

M. DE C. FINDLAY.

No. 26.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F Cartwright.

F.O. 371/758.
29328/26/09/44.
(No. 90.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 31, 1909.

The Austrian Ambassador came to see me to-day.

He said that the general tone of my remarks in the House of Commons on the 22nd⁽¹⁾ respecting the Balkan question had produced a favourable impression in

(¹) [*v. Parl. Deb.*, 1909, (House of Commons), Vol. 8, pp. 646-61.]

Austria, as perhaps I had noticed in the Austrian Press. But Baron Aehrenthal was afraid that a construction might be put on the use I had made of what had passed between Mr. Gladstone and the Austrian Ambassador in 1880 that might give rise to an unfair opinion. What the Austrian Ambassador had said then was that Austria had no intention of advancing further in the Balkans than she had already gone. This, however, did not refer to Bosnia and Herzegovina, but to such things as an advance to Salonica. That this was the case would be apparent if the whole of Mr. Gladstone's letter were studied.⁽²⁾

I replied that I had not even read the whole of the letter: and I remembered saying in the course of the debate that I was not using the extract I had quoted for the purpose of fastening any obligation upon Austria with regard to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I sent for a copy of the report of my speech, and I found there was in it a sentence to this effect, to which I called Count Mensdorff's attention.

I should not have thought of pleading what the Austrian Ambassador had said in 1880 as entailing an obligation upon Austria with regard to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina any more than I should have thought it reasonable of Austria to have claimed that anything Lord Salisbury had said outside the Treaty of Berlin entailed upon us an obligation to recognise the annexation. I had used the extract from Mr. Gladstone's letter in order to repel Sir Cha[rle]s Dilke's allegation that we were under a moral obligation to Austria to recognise the annexation whenever it took place.

As a matter of fact, now that the annexation had been recognised, I desired to bury all the controversy which had preceded it: and I explained to Count Mensdorff that I should not have referred to the question at all had not Sir Cha[rle]s Dilke raised it again.

I am, &c.

E. G[REY].

(²) [The text of Mr. Gladstone's letter to Count Károlyi of May 4, 1880, and of the letter from Count Károlyi to which it was a reply is given *infra*, pp. 773-4, App. I v. also *infra*, pp. 43-4, No. 35, and *encl.*; pp. 60-1, No. 56; pp. 70-1, No. 61, p. 80, No. 71.]

No. 27.

Mr Findlay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/606.

28848/28848/09/7.

Tel. (No. 82.) Confidential.

Sofia, August 2, 1909.

D. 1.20 P.M.

R. 2 P.M.

French Minister has received a telegram from his Government stating that M. Isvolsky, in recent conversation at Cherbourg, showed serious alarm at a report of understanding between Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, probably directed against Serbia. This understanding is supposed to have been concluded at recent secret interviews which are alleged to have taken place between Baron von Aehrenthal, the King of the Bulgarians, and Bulgarian Prime Minister and Minister of War.

There may have been discussions, but report as to conclusion of definite agreement appears to be based on pure conjecture, and on general principles to be most improbable. My Austrian colleague voluntarily assured me that he knew nothing of alleged interviews. I can find nothing in reports from His Majesty's Ambassador at Vienna to give colour to this scare.

(Secret.)

My French colleague is very excitable, and the Russian Legation is naturally very suspicious of Austrian designs. I believe this story to have been started by the French chargé d'affaires at Vienna.

(Repeated to Vienna.)

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/668.

29484/29484/09/17.

(No. 314.) Confidential.

Sir,

Paris, D. August 3, 1909.

R. August 6, 1909.

Monsieur Pichon returned from Cherbourg late last night and I saw His Excellency by appointment this morning. He authorized me to inform you that French foreign policy would in no way be altered by the change of Ministry⁽¹⁾ and that the Government intended to adhere closely to the alliance with Russia and to the "entente" with England and to confer with the Governments of both countries on all questions of general policy. He had found the Emperor of Russia, in his conversations at Cherbourg, mostly firmly resolved to follow the policy of the alliance with France and the understanding with England. His Majesty had given to the President of the Republic and to himself the most satisfactory assurances in that respect.

Monsieur Isvolsky, who had Baron d'Aehrenthal on the brain, had showed some nervousness in regard to the relations and compliments between France and Austria. Monsieur Pichon said that he had pointed out to the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs that France desired not to indispose Austria towards her, but to be on the most friendly terms with Austria compatible with the alliance between France and Russia. If a question were to arise in which the interests of Russia lay one way and those of Austria the other the French Government would of course adopt the Russian point of view. In like manner the French Government would expect, in any question that might come up in which the interests of France and Germany were divergent, that the Russian Government would support France and not Germany. Subject to that condition the French Government would offer no objection to the better relations which Monsieur Isvolsky was anxious to establish between Russia and Germany. All these better relations, so long as they did not run counter to international obligations, contributed to the maintenance of peace.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

MINUTES.

Rather a curious situation—France and Russia in alliance, each desiring to create a better understanding with two different nations both belonging to an opposing group of Powers.

R. H. C.

Q[uer]y. Instruct Sir F. Bertie to express to M. Pichon the satisfaction of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] on learning of his assurances that the foreign policy of France will continue unaltered.

R. H. C.

M. Pichon's retort to M. Izvolsky is much to the point. The French Gov[ernment]t have already caught the Russian Gov[ernment]t negotiating an agreement (relative to the North Sea and Baltic) quite behind the back of the French Gov[ernment]t and this is a good reminder that such agreements must not be undertaken by Russia without France.

G. S. S.

6.8.

W. L.

E. G.

(¹) [M. Clemenceau was succeeded by M. Briand on July 24, 1909.]

[ED. NOTE.—After meeting the President of the French Republic at Cherbourg the Emperor Nicholas II returned King Edward's official visit to Reval by a visit to Cowes on August 2, 1909. v. Sir Sidney Lee's *King Edward VII*, II, pp. 690-2, and *infra*, pp. 37-8, No. 32. For Mr. O'Beirne's report of Russian opinion in reference to the meeting, v. *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, pp. 801-3, No. 865.]

Memorandum by Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/732.

29989/23876/09/38.

H.M. Yacht VICTORIA & ALBERT,

August 3, 1909.

M. Iswolsky, with C[oun]t Benckendorff, met the Prime Minister and Sir E. Grey with Sir A. Nicolson on the "Enchantress" on August 3. M. Iswolsky dwelt at some length on the causes which had led to the differences between Baron d'Aehrenthal and himself, and laid stress on the fact that it was owing to the action of the former in respect to the Novi Bazar⁽¹⁾ railway and the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina⁽²⁾ that the agreement between Austria and Russia with regard to Balkan affairs had been abandoned. He reiterated the account of the Buchlau interview⁽³⁾ in the same terms as he had employed at Paris to Sir F. Bertie at the time when the intention of Austria to annex the two provinces had been announced. M. Iswolsky repeated his version of what had passed at Buchlau, but his explanations on the matter are too well known to require fresh record. On Sir E. Grey mentioning that the Powers had practically recognized the annexation, and that the only question which was left open was the manner in which the recent modifications of the Berlin Treaty should be formally recorded,⁽⁴⁾ M. Iswolsky remarked that he demurred to the statement that the annexation had been accepted by the Signatory Powers. On the contrary he was disposed to argue that by the suppression of Art[icle] 25 the presence of Austria in the two provinces was now without any international sanction: and that Turkey alone had given her formal assent to the annexation. He did not, however, press this point—though it is possible that he wished to enter a caveat against it being assumed that because Russia had agreed to the suppression of Art[icle] 25 she had ipso facto recognized the new order of things.

M. Iswolsky expressed some apprehension that some agreement might be reached between Bulgaria and Austria in regard to the future in the Balkan Peninsula, and intimated that he had some grounds for fearing that Austria might prosecute her advance to Salonica through the Drin Valley, and purchase the goodwill of Bulgaria by promoting her aspirations to Nisch and Pirot and in Macedonia, with even a hazy prospect of eventually acquiring Constantinople. He admitted that these projects could not be seriously entertained unless the collapse of the Turkish rule in Europe appeared to be imminent, but he seemed to have little confidence in the stability of the new Turkish régime: and he considered that if the Cretan question, for instance, reached an acute stage troubles might ensue in Macedonia which might give Bulgaria an occasion for intervention. Sir E. Grey observed to him that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] were not in possession of any information which could lead them to believe that Bulgaria was disposed to come to terms with Austria, and that indeed the Bulgarian Ch[argé] d'Aff[aires] had recently expressed some anxiety lest Austria had any aims on Salonica. M. Iswolsky was also informed that the majority of the Bulgarian nation would almost certainly be opposed to any Teuton advance to the Aegean, but though he did not combat this view he seemed to consider that King Ferdinand might be open to a bargain with Austria, and might carry his people with him. Sir E. Grey enquired of him if he had spoken on the subject with M. Pichon at Cherbourg. He replied in the affirmative, and added that M. Pichon had made no proposals. He said that M. Louis had thrown out a rather vague suggestion that the Powers should guarantee the integrity of the Ottoman dominions: but in reply to some observations from Sir E. Grey he agreed that such a guarantee

(1) [*cp. Gooch & Temperley, Vol. V, pp. 321-55, Chapter XXXIX, passim, and p. 815, Ed. note.*]

(2) [*cp. ib., Vol. V, pp. 356-815, Chapters XL and XLI, passim.*]

(3) [*v. ib., Vol. V, pp. 382-4, No. 292, and encl.*]

(4) [References to the long discussions on this subject will be found in *ib., Vol. V. v. Subject Index, sub TREATIES, &c., Treaty of Berlin.*]

would be dangerous, and in the event of troubles in Macedonia would involve the Powers in serious complications. He cordially agreed that, in the circumstances it was of great importance that the new Turkish régime should receive all possible support and sympathy, as forming the best bulwark against Teuton or Slav aggression. He asked Sir E. Grey whether H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t would view an Austrian advance to Salonica with indifference: and he was informed that no Power could view with indifference a matter which would so seriously transform the map of Europe.

As to Crete, M. Iswolsky was informed of the latest news which had been received from that island, and of the recommendations which had been informally made to the S[ublime] Porte not to exaggerate the importance of such incidents as the hoisting of the Greek flag etc. Sir E. Grey explained to M. Iswolsky that the best course to pursue would be to continue the status quo—as at present existing: that Greece was acting reasonably and moderately and was giving no cause for umbrage to the Porte: and that it would be well if the four Powers were to give the Cretans clearly to understand that they should establish a Court of Appeal of their own, and should abandon the project of sending any Cretan deputies to the Legislature at Athens. They could also be warned that any disturbance of the status quo would necessitate the landing of international forces. M. Iswolsky was willing to concur in such a course.

As to Persia M. Iswolsky spoke 1. as to the situation at Tehran. 2. the presence of Russian troops at Tabreez. 3. the steps taken by the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t. Sir E. Grey informed him of the conversation which he had had quite recently with the Nasr al Mulk. Sir E. Grey stated that he had warned the Nasr al Mulk that the Russian Officers in the Persian service could not be replaced by officers of another nationality: and that he had been told that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t could not agree that Russian officers should be excluded from the Persian service. At the same time the Nasr al Mulk had been informed that possibly Col[onel] Liakhoff would be replaced by another officer. Thé Nasr al Mulk had also mooted the question of the Persian Gov[ernmen]t engaging the services of foreign advisers in most branches of the administration, and had recommended that such advisers should be Frenchmen. Sir E. Grey remarked that it was undesirable that the administration of Persia should be "entirely Frenchified," and that as a Frenchman was already Financial Adviser, it might be possible to employ Russians to supervise the Customs in the north of Persia, and British for those in southern Persia and the Gulf. M. Iswolsky raised no objections to these views and suggestions. He was also informed that rumours had been current that the Persian Gov[ernmen]t desired to replace M. Smirnoff, the young Shah's tutor, by Dr. Lindley: but that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t were not inclined to promote this step: and would co-operate in this matter and in that of the Zil es Sultan to prevent changes to the disadvantage of Russia. Sir E. Grey suggested definitely to M. Iswolsky that both Gov[ernmen]ts might inform the Zil es Sultan that having recognized the new Shah it was out of the question that they should recognize the Zil es Sultan.

M. Iswolsky expressed some desire that the reforms of the judicial administration should be at once undertaken: but did not press the point when it was explained to him that the more urgent need was to set the new Gov[ernmen]t on its legs: and that judicial reform could be undertaken later. M. Iswolsky explained at some length his views as to the retention of Russian troops both at Kazvin and at Tabreez. He stated that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t had been most unwilling to send any troops in the first instance: and that only the most urgent necessity had compelled them to do so. The Russian Gov[ernmen]t were most desirous to withdraw the troops from both places at the earliest possible moment, and were anxiously awaiting an opportunity of doing so. But they could not well undertake such a step until they were assured that order was restored, and that all danger to foreigners and foreign interests had been removed. If the troops were withdrawn, and had then to be sent back again it would be exceedingly difficult to recall them to Russia a second

time. As soon as a competent Gov[erno]r Gen[era]l with a sufficient force was established at Tabreez, the Russian troops would be withdrawn from that town. The Russian Gov[ernmen]t had wished for the appointment of the Ala ed Dowleh to the post, but he had now been sent to Shiraz, and the man who had been named to Tabreez did not inspire the Russian Gov[ernmen]t with much confidence. One great difficulty in the situation was the presence and activity of the Caucasian revolutionaries, who rendered a return to a peaceful condition of affairs somewhat problematical. The new Chief of Police at Tehran was a Caucasian terrorist who had committed several crimes in the Caucasus; and then the Bakhtiari had also to be considered, as they had no great reputation as an order loving community. As soon as the situation at Tabreez and Tehran gave reasonable grounds that order would be maintained, the Russian Gov[ernmen]t would gladly recall their troops. On this point M. Iswolsky was emphatic and decided. Sir E. Grey told M. Iswolsky that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would willingly support the Russian Gov[ernmen]t in urging on the Persian Gov[ernmen]t the adoption of any steps which would hasten and facilitate the return to orderly conditions, and thus obviate the necessity of the retention of Russian troops in Persia. It was pointed out to M. Iswolsky that the continued stay of Russian troops fostered an anti-Russian feeling in Persia, and also supplied an excuse to the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t for delaying the evacuation of those localities beyond the boundary zone which they had recently occupied. M. Iswolsky mentioned that without sufficient cause the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t had occupied localities of considerable strategical importance, while Russia with good reason had occupied places of no strategical importance, and that the presence of Russian troops was an expense and of no advantage to his country. He expressed the hope that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would associate themselves with the Russian Gov[ernmen]t in urging the Porte to withdraw their troops and to settle the frontier question.

M. Iswolsky spoke warmly as to his desire for a frank and full interchange of views between the two Gov[ernmen]ts on all questions; and expressed his gratification at the accord which existed between Sir E. Grey and himself.

A[RTHUR] N[ICOLSON].

August 3, 1909.

It should perhaps be added that M. Iswolsky mentioned that he was being continually reminded by Germany that Russia was sailing on a wrong tack, and that intimations were made that he should come to an arrangement with Austria. Moreover he had been approached by Italy to conclude some arrangement with her. As regards Austria, past experience did not encourage him to renew an engagement with her, and moreover public opinion in Russia would be opposed to any such understanding. As to Italy he did not see on what basis an arrangement could be made.

It did not appear from the remarks of M. Iswolsky that there could be any truth in the information which reached the S[ublime] Porte some time back that Russia had made a secret agreement with Bulgaria.

A. N.

No. 30.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/668.

29487/28545/09/17.

(No. 318.)

Sir,

Paris, D. August 4, 1909.

R. August 6, 1909.

M. Louis, the French Ambassador at Petersburg, who, during the absence on a holiday of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, is acting as Political Director at the Quai d'Orsay informed me to-day that there had not been a single incident or drawback to mar the harmony of the relations between all the French and Russian

authorities during the visit of the Emperor and Empress of Russia to Cherbourg. His Majesty had on several occasions expressed his firm resolve to adhere to the Franco-Russian alliance in every respect and to remain in constant touch with the French Government in every question of foreign policy.

M. Louis stated that he had acquired the conviction from his conversations with the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs that M. Isvolsky attached the greatest value to the understanding with England and was determined to observe it faithfully. M. Louis thought that M. Isvolsky deserved great credit for having succeeded, notwithstanding M. Hartwig's opposition and the intrigues of influential persons at Petersburg, in carrying out the policy of close co-operation with England in Persia. He was of opinion that M. Isvolsky was now in favour with the Emperor who, having realised that the policy which M. Isvolsky represented was the safest for Russia, would give his full support to his Minister in carrying it through in spite of opposition from persons in the entourage of His Majesty.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE

No. 31.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/606.
29473/28848/09/7.
Tel. (No. 156.)

Vienna, August 5, 1909.

D. 2.30 P.M.

R. 3.30 P.M.

Mr. Findlay's telegram, No. 82, Confidential.⁽²⁾

I can obtain no information tending to confirm existence of alleged secret understanding between Austria and Bulgaria directed against Serbia.

French Chargé d'Affaires, who I believe originated the rumour, appears to have no evidence to confirm it beyond what he calls mysterious visit of the King of the Bulgarians and his Prime Minister to Vienna. Russian Ambassador has been absent and I am afraid Russian Government have been receiving, as usual, alarmist reports from their Military Attaché here.

Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs, who called on me four days ago, made no allusion to an Austro-Bulgarian understanding against his country but on the contrary spoke of the relations between Austria-Hungary and Servia as having greatly improved of late.

Sent to Sofia.

MINUTE.

I think the whole thing must be a mare's nest. Paris will get this in the bag to-night.

H. N.

Aug. 5, 1909.

R. P. M.

L. M.

C. H.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Belgrade (as No. 39); to St. Petersburg (as No. 223).]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 31, No. 27.]

Memorandum by Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/732.
30519/23876/09/38.
Secret.

Foreign Office, August 6, 1909.

The Emperor of Russia asked me to come to see him on Tuesday morning (the 3rd August) on board his yacht.⁽¹⁾

He expressed great satisfaction that the Anglo-Russian Convention⁽²⁾ had stood so well the test of the difficulties in Persia; and, though he did not express any wish for any new arrangement of a more binding nature between the two Governments, he was most cordial in the expression of his pleasure that the working of the convention had confirmed and strengthened the good relations between us.

I asked him whether I might speak freely on the Persian question, to which he readily assented.⁽³⁾

I then said that we had had some difficulty with a section of opinion here, composed of people who had made up their minds that Russia was determined to establish a military occupation or at least some sort of protectorate in the north of Persia. The fact that no Russian troops had been sent to Tehran, thus allowing things to take their own course there, had silenced this section for the present. I was, however, afraid that a corresponding section of Russian opinion might be apprehensive that what had been happening in Persia might lead to changes unfavourable to Russia. As instances, I mentioned three things which might lead to a feeling of this kind: (1) the displacement of the Russian officers now in Persia; (2) a successful intrigue by the Zil to make himself Shah; and (3) the dismissal of the present Russian tutor of the young Shah and his replacement by an Englishman, such as Dr. Lindley. I said I assumed that the Russian Government could not agree to the replacement of Russian officers in Persia by officers of another nationality.

The Emperor told me that he was so anxious for good relations with us that, in order to promote them, he would have been ready to agree to the withdrawal of the Russian officers from Persia, had it not been for the fact that they would surely have been replaced by officers of another nationality.

I replied that I quite understood this. I then said that in this matter, and in the other matters I had mentioned and on such further occasions as might arise in future, we should be willing to co-operate with the Russian Government in order to prevent changes in the north of Persia which would be to the disadvantage of Russia: for we did not regard the Anglo-Russian Convention as disturbing the position which Russia had acquired in the north of Persia before the convention was made. We considered that the convention was intended to secure that that position would not be used to weaken us on the Indian frontier, or to our disadvantage in other ways; while, at the same time, it secured that we should not use any influence we might have in Persia to the disadvantage of Russia.

The Emperor mentioned that he had seen the German Emperor, and was to see him again on his way back to Russia.

I said I was glad he had met the Emperor before coming to Cowes, and I hoped that meeting would prevent a renewal of unreasonable talk there had been in Germany with regard to the Reval visit.

The Emperor of Russia told me that he had assured the German Emperor at their last meeting that nothing had been done at the Reval visit to which Germany could take exception.⁽⁴⁾ His assurances had been well received, and he thought the German Emperor had left him in good humour and convinced that there was no

⁽¹⁾ [At Cowes. *v. supra*, p. 32, *Ed note*; also *infra*, immediately succeeding document.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. IV, pp. 502-4, No. 456, and pp. 618-20, App. I.]

⁽³⁾ [The next three paragraphs were communicated by Sir E. Grey to Count Benckendorff on August 12. Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, pp. 232-46, Chapter XXXVII, *passim*.]

reason for apprehension. During the stay of the Emperor of Russia at Cowes, he had received a telegram from the German Emperor, asking him to make any use he pleased of the Imperial German yacht at Cowes, such as ordering lunch on board of it. He looked upon this as evidence of the German Emperor's friendly disposition, and thought it was satisfactory.

I said that nothing could be more groundless than the suspicion that we wished to make trouble between Germany and other countries. We had been sincerely glad when Germany came to an arrangement with France after the Casa Blanca incident. We were quite ready to be on good terms with Germany, and the only thing which annoyed us was that some German diplomatists tried to make mischief by endeavouring to persuade other countries that it was not to their interest to be good friends with us, and that they would gain nothing from our friendship.

The Emperor replied that he himself had had experience of the mischief made by German diplomatists. In 1905, the German Emperor had told him his views about Morocco, and they were so satisfactory that he had expressed his cordial agreement with them. This was after the German Emperor's visit to Tangier. Subsequently, however, the Emperor of Russia had heard that the German Minister at Tangier was working against France and doing all he could to make trouble for her. The Emperor of Russia had told the German Emperor that the action of the German Minister was not in accord with the views expressed by the German Emperor. Nevertheless, there had been a great deal of trouble about Morocco.

The Emperor told me that, in his opinion, tricks and intrigues did not lead to success.

I said I was sure this was the case eventually; for in foreign relations, as in business, confidence was essential to success in the long run.

The Emperor also spoke about Crete, and said that he had asked M. Pichon whether it was not the case that France had at one time taken the initiative to promote annexation to Greece. M. Pichon had replied that M. Clemenceau had, at one time, been strongly in sympathy with Greece.

I said that I believed M. Clemenceau had been in favour of annexation of the beginning of the year. But when the German Emperor went to the Mediterranean, and it was reported that he had expressed himself strongly in favour of annexation, and had promised the King of Greece to do all he could to bring it about, M. Clemenceau had become suspicious that the German Emperor had made some arrangement with the King of Greece as to facilities for German warships in Suda Bay in Crete, or some other harbour, and M. Clemenceau had altered his view as to annexation. I did not suppose that there was any truth in this suspicion, but I thought it accounted for the apparent change in the French view of the question.

The Emperor also told me in the course of conversation that he had been much impressed by the strength of our fleet, and those who were with him and had expert knowledge which enabled them to estimate naval strength had confirmed this impression. The fleet was more powerful even than they had expected.

E. G[REY].

No. 33.

Memorandum by Sir Eduard Grey.

F.O. 371/732

30520/23876/09/38.

Secret.

Foreign Office, August 6, 1909.

M. Isvolsky and Count Benckendorff came to lunch on board the Admiralty yacht at Cowes on Tuesday, the 3rd August, and they afterwards had a long conversation with the Prime Minister, Sir Arthur Nicolson, and myself.⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ [*cp supra*, pp. 33-5, No. 29.]

M. Isvolsky reviewed the events in the Balkans during the past autumn and winter. He gave his version of what had passed at Buchlau,⁽²⁾ which accorded with what he had said before. Baron Aehrenthal had told him that at some time or another Austria would have to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina. M. Isvolsky had replied that, having regard to the past, Russia could not very well oppose annexation, but she must maintain that it was a European question which could not be settled without the consent of the Powers, and if it was raised, Russia would probably wish to bring forward other questions, such as that of the Straits. Baron Aehrenthal had promised to let M. Isvolsky know before anything was done. M. Isvolsky heard nothing more till he reached Paris, and there he received information from Baron Aehrenthal actually *after* the communication of the Austrian Government as to annexation had been made to the Powers generally.

M. Isvolsky expressed great anxiety as to the future. It seemed to him that the outlook in Turkey was most uncertain. He agreed that the new régime there should be supported, and that its success was to be desired; but he thought it very probable that the new régime would fail, and that there would be renewed trouble. If this happened, he was afraid that Austria would make an agreement with Bulgaria—he thought it possible that Austria was already making one—under which Austria would advance to Salonica, while Bulgaria entered Macedonia with the promise of an immediate acquisition of new territory, and the prospect of Constantinople in the background. The old agreement between Austria and Russia had been that they would not disturb the *status quo* in the Balkans, and that if it was disturbed they would not seek to acquire territory, but would co-operate to secure a redistribution of territory amongst the Balkan States that would maintain the balance of power. But after what had happened with regard to the Novi-Bazar Railway and the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, how could Russia renew such an arrangement with Austria with any confidence? M. Isvolsky was evidently afraid that Austria intended to sacrifice Serbia to Bulgaria, and it seemed to him that Austria must in some way be preventing Bulgaria and Serbia from coming to friendly terms with each other.

Italy had proposed that Russia should join in an agreement with Austria and Italy. But this would look as if Russia were joining the Triple Alliance, and M. Isvolsky had refused to entertain the proposal. It was, however, always being pointed out to him that he would gain nothing by siding with England, and that if he did not make arrangements with other countries Russia would get the worst of it in any troubles which might arise in the Balkans. It was hinted that the check Russia had received recently might occur again.

An arrangement between Russia and Bulgaria would be very useful in the event of a break-up of Turkey, but if such an arrangement were made now, it would excite suspicion.

M. Isvolsky asked me pointedly whether we should regard with indifference an Austrian advance to Salonica.

I replied that if Austria advanced to Salonica, the change in the map of Europe would be so great that it could not be a matter of indifference to us or, I supposed, to any other country interested in the Near East. I asked whether it was possible that Bulgaria might be willing to keep open the question of an arrangement with Russia until it could be seen how matters were going in Turkey.

M. Isvolsky expressed great distrust of King Ferdinand in this matter, though he admitted that the Bulgarian Government and people would not like an Austrian advance to Salonica. But, if the Turkish Government failed, there would certainly be trouble in Macedonia, and Bulgaria would not miss the opportunity of going in. Bulgaria would then find that she had to make terms with Austria, and would do so.

I said that the only thing we could do, for the present, was to support the new régime in Turkey as long as there was any prospect of its success. Once or twice lately those who had been longest in Constantinople, and thought they understood

(2) [*v. supra*, p. 33, No. 29, and note (2).]

the situation very well, had expressed the opinion that the Young Turks were failing, or had actually failed; but recent events had proved very clearly that it would have been a great mistake to accept any assumption of this kind.

M. Isvolsky did not differ from this, and agreed that the new régime should be supported.

One favourable conclusion which I draw from what he said with regard to the Near East is that he is genuinely anxious to see Turkey strong, and that he fears a weak Turkey which would give openings for an Austrian advance.

An unfavourable conclusion which I draw is that he is very apprehensive of a further Austrian move, and afraid that if it occurs it may be as successful as the recent move.

We expressed the opinion, however, that Austria was not anxious to make a new move at present, and was certainly not anxious to be manœuvred again into a position of too great dependence on Germany. If, during the recent troubles, the Montenegrin and Servian question had been settled first, and the Turkish question afterwards, it would have appeared that Austria, and not Russia, had had the diplomatic defeat, for the last stage in the negotiations would have been the payment by Austria to Turkey of the large indemnity which Austria had originally said she never would pay, but had now paid.⁽³⁾

We then passed to the subject of Persia, and I spoke to M. Isvolsky in the same sense as I had spoken to the Emperor. I added, however, that it was very desirable that the Russian troops should be withdrawn from Persia as soon as possible. The longer they stayed the greater was the risk of an anti-Russian agitation in Persia, and, if such an agitation did spring up, it would be more difficult than ever to withdraw the troops. Also, as long as the Russian troops remained in Persia, our position was very weak with regard to the presence of Turkish troops in Persia.

M. Isvolsky said that both he and the Viceroy of the Caucasus were most anxious to withdraw the troops. The Viceroy complained that while they remained in Persia they could not go on with their proper training, and the expense was very great. But the Russians must have some guarantee that their road, which was their trade route, would be kept open. They had wished the Ala-ed-Dowleh to be Governor at Tabreez, but the Persian Government refused to send him, and instead had appointed some one else who was not so good.

I said that, as Tabreez was near the Russian frontier, it was for the Russian Government to say what measures the Persian Government must take in order to inspire confidence and enable the Russian troops to be withdrawn. We should certainly co-operate with the Russian Government in urging these measures upon the Persian Government.

As to the Russian troops at Kasvin, M. Isvolsky held that their presence there had, by its moral effect, prevented the Nationalists from committing excesses in Tehran.

I demurred to this. I thought that the fact impressed by both of us upon the Nationalists that attacks on foreigners would certainly lead to Russian intervention would, by itself, have been sufficient.

M. Isvolsky said that he was anxious to withdraw the troops from Kasvin, but before doing this there must be some guarantee that affairs in Tehran would not become worse than ever. At present there was no guarantee of this kind. It was very difficult for the Persians to deal with the Russian Caucasian revolutionaries, who had been the real fighting people in the recent disturbances. It appeared, also, that the new chief of police in Tehran was a Russian revolutionary who had committed terrorist outrages in Russia, and had fled from the Russian police. As it took some time to send troops to Kasvin, if the troops which were there now were with-

⁽³⁾ [The memorandum up to this point was sent to Mr. O'Beirne, St. Petersburg, Despatch No. 229, on August 6, 1909. (F.O. 371/758. 30626/26/09/44.)]

drawn and then had to be sent back again it would be much more difficult to withdraw them a second time.

I again said that we would co-operate at Tehran in promoting any measures the Russian Government thought necessary to restore confidence. I hoped that a beginning might be made in the withdrawal of the Russian troops. I thought that perhaps stronger guards might be kept at the legations and consulates for some time, if this was considered desirable.

M. Isvolsky spoke with great emphasis about the Turkish encroachments upon Persia. They had begun long before the present troubles in Persia. The Turks had seized strategic positions—a thing which the Russians had not done. They had brought in the Kurds with them: they had taken possession of land; they exercised administrative functions; and they turned Persians into Turkish subjects.

I said that I was quite ready to join in pointing out these things to the Turks at Constantinople. I did not think the Turks were likely to withdraw until they felt sure that the Russian troops were withdrawn too. But when this withdrawal had been made, I agreed that we must bring very strong pressure to bear upon the Turks to withdraw at least to their own side of the outer line of the neutral zone, within which it had been decided years ago that the true frontier must be found. It would also be desirable that we should press the Turkish Government to agree to mediation for the final settlement of the frontier.

Generally, M. Isvolsky expressed great satisfaction with the way in which the Anglo-Russian convention had stood the test of the disturbances in Persia. He thanked me for what I had said with regard to the Russian officers, the Zil, and the young Shah's tutor. Finally, he said that it was evident we were in complete agreement.

E. G[REY].

No. 34.

Sir E. Grey to Sir G. Barclay.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Barclay,

Foreign Office, August 6, 1909.

I have had two conversations with Nasr-ul-Mulk.

It was understood that we were both speaking unofficially, and were talking to each other simply as two persons who desired the welfare of Persia, and were opening their minds to each other.

He dwelt on the importance of having foreign advisers in the military and civil administration of Persia. He pointed out, however, that it would be undesirable to have only Russian advisers in the north, and only British advisers in the south; and I agreed that it would look like a partition of Persia. He thought that Russia would object to the appointment of Germans or Austrians, and I told him I thought so too. There was an objection to the employment of persons from small countries, because small countries were liable to the influence of larger countries. Therefore, he inclined to the appointment of French advisers.

After seeing M. Iswolsky at Cowes,⁽²⁾ I had my second conversation with the Nasr-ul-Mulk, and told him that if only French advisers were employed there would be the difficulty that it would look as if Persia were being Frenchified.

I therefore put forward the following suggestion. In the financial departments in Persia, French advisers should be employed under M. Bizot. If new foreigners were employed in the Persian Customs Service, they should come from the country which had loans secured on the Customs which the respective foreigners were called in to supervise; i.e.: the foreign advisers would be Russians in the north of Persia, and British in the south and in the Gulf ports. As for the Persian Army, the Russians

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 31.]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document, also *supra*, pp. 33-5, No. 29.]

could not be expected to agree to their Officers being replaced by Officers of another nationality.

The Nasr-ul-Mulk said this was undoubtedly the case with regard to the Officers of the Persian Cossacks, but instructors of other nationalities might be required for the artillery, infantry, and the Army generally.

I told him I did not suppose that Persia would require or be able to pay for, a large Army; and that perhaps Russian Officers from the Persian Cossacks could be spared to give instruction to other branches of the Army at Tehran or in the north. In any case, I thought these Officers ought to be sufficient for the present.

The Nasr-ul-Mulk laid stress on the desirability of getting the Russian troops withdrawn from Persia. Their continued presence would create suspicion and give rise to anti-Russian feeling.

I told him that M. Iswolsky was quite anxious to withdraw the troops, but had pointed out to me that if they were withdrawn and then had to be sent back again, a second withdrawal would be much more difficult. The Russians wished to see a strong Persian Governor at Tabriz, and were disappointed that the Ala-ed-Dowleh had not been appointed. The Russians felt considerable anxiety owing to the presence of so many Caucasian revolutionaries in Persia; they knew them to be turbulent spirits, and they doubted whether the Persian Government would be able to control them. M. Iswolsky had complained especially that the new Chief of Police in Tehran was a Russian revolutionary who had committed terrorist outrages in Russia, and had fled from the Russian Police.

The Nasr-ul-Mulk said it was difficult to see what guarantees would be sufficient to induce the Russian Government to withdraw their troops.

I replied that I had asked M. Iswolsky to make definite suggestions, and I had promised to co-operate at Tehran in urging the Persian Government to carry out these suggestions, in order that confidence might be restored and the Russian troops withdrawn.

I also told the Nasr-ul-Mulk that we were much occupied with the Turkish encroachments upon Persia. M. Iswolsky had pointed out to me, with truth, the many respects in which these encroachments were graver than the Russian action in sending troops: the Turks had advanced into Persia before there was any excuse for doing so, they had seized strategical points, they had exercised administrative functions, they had taken possession of land, they had brought in Kurds with them, and they had turned Persians into Turkish subjects. We should have to take up this question at Constantinople soon.

In addition, I told the Nasr-ul-Mulk what I had said to M. Iswolsky with regard to the Zil and the tutor of the young Shah.

The Nasr-ul-Mulk cordially concurred in my view that the Anglo-Russian Convention had been instrumental, so far, in preventing a break-up of Persia. I urged him, in the interests of Persia, to go back as soon as possible: for his presence there would be a great help, and he would be able to rely fully on both the British and Russian Legations for support in keeping Persia on her own feet, instead of being embarrassed (as Persian Ministers had been in the past) by being called upon to please first one Legation and then the other.

He said he would go back to Persia, and hoped to start in about a fortnight from now. He could not, however, promise to accept any position of responsibility until he had studied the situation on the spot. He hoped that when he was in Tehran he might be able to communicate freely and informally with you. He thoroughly understood that there was no longer any question of being pro-Russian or pro-British, and that Russia and Britain were now working together in Persia.

I hope he will return to Persia because he has an enlightened mind. But I am not at all sure that he has courage enough to face a difficult situation.

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/758.
30044/26/09/44A.
(No. 129.)
Sir,

Vienna, D. August 7, 1909.

R. August 10, 1909.

With reference to my despatch No. 125 of the 27th July last,⁽¹⁾ in which allusion was made to the Austrian interpretation of the letter addressed by Count Karolyi to Mr. Gladstone in the year 1880 on the subject of Austria-Hungary's policy in the Balkans,⁽²⁾ I have the honour to enclose herewith translation of a statement made by Baron von Hengelmüller, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at Washington, to a correspondent of the "Neue Freie Presse," in which he gives his recollection of the circumstances surrounding the writing of the above-mentioned letter.

Baron von Hengelmüller's account is interesting as it appears that he took a leading part in the negotiations which preceded the writing of Count Karolyi's letter to Mr. Gladstone, and of the latter's reply to the same. Baron von Hengelmüller brings evidence to show that Count Karolyi's words referred not to the question of the possible future annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary, but to the non-advance of Austria-Hungary in the direction of Mitrovitza and Salonica.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

Enclosure in No. 35.

Translation of Extract from Neue Freie Presse of August 7, 1909.

The Gladstone-Karolyi incident belongs to the interesting reminiscences of my diplomatic career and I took a direct part in the negotiations which led up to it.

I have in my possession at Washington records dating from that time with regard to the events which were then taking place in London. I am now speaking without assistance, directly from memory, but I can accurately remember events.

When the Liberals returned to power in 1880 it was for a long time uncertain who would be Prime Minister. Gladstone had resigned in 1874 the nominal leadership of the Liberal Party. Count Karolyi, whose patriotic feelings had been deeply injured by Gladstone's attack upon Austria-Hungary in his Midlothian campaign, had made it clear to everyone that it was impossible for him to carry on relations with Gladstone. If I can remember rightly, he even made use of the expression that he would have to "cut" Gladstone. It was said that he was acting without orders from Vienna but was fully conscious of the possible consequences of his action and was prepared to resign his post in London to which he was sincerely attached.

In the meantime, Gladstone had become Prime Minister.

We spent anxious days of suspense as to what the issue of events would be. I remember meeting Lord Rosebery in Brighton at the time. He had supported Gladstone during his Midlothian campaign, was his friend and confidant, and was already looked upon as a rising man. During our conversation, he took the initiative in explaining that Gladstone had learnt with regret of the pain his words had inflicted on Count Karolyi and was ready to accord satisfaction to his patriotic sensibilities. He could not, however, say simply "Pater peccavi." Our conversation further turned upon Gladstone's "Hands Off" declaration and the policy of expansion that had been ascribed to us; we spoke also of "Au delà de Mitrovitza" and the advance to Salonika. Not a word was said as to the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the provisional or definite annexation or as to future developments. As I have said, I am speaking from memory but I believe that Lord Rosebery,

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch summarised the comments of the Austrian press on the speeches of Sir C. Dilke and Sir E. Grey on July 22. (F.O. 371/601. 28669/28669/09/3.)]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 30-1, No. 26, and note ⁽²⁾.]

who is the only living actor in that episode, will confirm the correctness of my memory. I returned to London and reported to my chief. He was exceedingly pleased and, on the strength of the information I had given him, began negotiating with Lord Granville. The result was that Count Karolyi wrote Gladstone a letter not intended for publication in which he explained that we were not pursuing a policy of expansion in the Balkans whereupon Gladstone made his well-known public reply in which he declared his earlier statements to rest upon incorrect information and gave full and complete satisfaction to our patriotic sentiments. In the negotiations between Count Karolyi and Lord Granville, about which I was always kept "au courant" by my chief, there was a great deal said as to our advance to Salonika and especially of our policy of expansion but not a word about occupation or annexation. It was only a question of meeting Gladstone halfway in his spontaneous desire to make reparation and not of defining afresh our policy in the East. Naturally Count Karolyi made the declaration to Lord Granville and Gladstone in understanding with Baron Haymerle who was then Minister for Foreign Affairs and this could all the more easily be done as an idea of an advance to Salonika and "au delà de Mitrovitza" was as little entertained by us then as it is now.

No. 36.

Memorandum communicated to Count Benckendorff.

F.O. 371/758.

27905/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, August 9, 1909.

His Majesty's Government have had under careful consideration the draft reply which the Russian Government consider might suitably be sent to the representations of the Ottoman Government in regard to the modification of alinéa 4 of Article 29 of the Treaty of Berlin.⁽¹⁾

With regard to the first paragraph of the Alinéa in question, His Majesty's Government are of opinion that, as the suppression of Alinéa 5 has modified the situation to the detriment of Turkey, owing to the acquisition by Montenegro of the power to have vessels of war, the Ottoman Government are justified in demanding that the freedom of navigation on the Boyana should in the case of Montenegro be limited to the mercantile marine. If the suggestion of the Russian Government were carried into effect, Turkey would be deprived of the right which she has long enjoyed of sending warships into the Lake of Scutari.

As the Russian Government are aware, His Majesty's Government have throughout the recent negotiations on the Near Eastern question consistently maintained that they could not press upon the Ottoman Government the acceptance of terms which would be to the disadvantage of Turkey, and they regret that they are consequently unable to adhere to the proposal of the Russian Government in regard to this part of the question.

The question of the suppression of the second part of Alinéa 4 is, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, in a different category; they are unable to appreciate the contention that, in view of the suppression of Alinéa 7, Turkey will be injuriously affected by the maintenance of the second part of Alinéa 4, which debars Montenegro as well as Turkey from erecting fortifications along the course of the Boyana. Alinéa 7 clearly appears to relate only to that portion of Montenegrin territory which does not border on the course of the River Boyana.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 26-7, No. 23, and *min.*]

As the Russian Government have been already informed, His Majesty's Government have no direct interest in the matter, and so far as the second part of Alinéa 4 is concerned, they are prepared to accept any proposal upon which the Powers more directly concerned may agree.⁽²⁾

(²) [*r supra*, pp. 26-7, No. 23, and *min*]

No. 37.

Memorandum by Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/732

30521/23876/09/38.

Secret.

Foreign Office, August 9, 1909.

I had some further conversation with M. Isvolsky today.

He expressed pleasure at finding that we were so much in agreement, and showed no anxiety to discuss matters in detail.

I gave him our latest information from Persia, as to the desirability of getting the Shah to depart as soon as possible, and as to the alleged Russian subject who has been appointed chief of the police.

M. Isvolsky said it would be a good thing that M. Poklevski should reach Tehran as soon as possible and discuss the situation with Sir George Barclay; that would be the best way of dealing with the details.

I also gave M. Isvolsky the latest information about Crete, saying that if we gave the Turkish Government a definite undertaking that the Greek flag of which they complained would be hauled down, their hands would be strengthened in restraining public opinion in Turkey, and all pretext for Turkish intervention would be removed. At the same time, I thought we ought to impress upon the Cretans that they owed their autonomy to the four Powers, that it still depended upon the action of the four Powers, and that the Cretans would endanger it if they did not take our advice.

As to inviting Germany and Austria to co-operate in Crete, I thought it was unnecessary to ask for their co-operation so long as Crete alone was in question, though, of course, if complications arose in Macedonia, we should have to ask them to co-operate. If we asked them to assist in Crete, and they did not wish to do so, they would refuse; and the fact of their having been invited might be open to misconstruction at Constantinople.

I expressed satisfaction at having heard that the Russians considered their relations with Japan were good.

M. Isvolsky said they were. He added, however, that the Japanese were now abolishing the Korean Department of Justice, and this might be a prelude to annexation. The annexation of Corea would raise a serious question.

I told M. Isvolsky that the Japanese Ambassador had said that the Japanese naturally looked forward to the abolition of extra-territorial jurisdiction in Corea in the future, but were not going to raise this question at present.

M. Isvolsky regarded this as satisfactory for the time being.

I also informed M. Isvolsky of the warning which Baron Aehrenthal had given to Roumania against interfering with Bulgaria. I said I thought it was a good sign that Baron Aehrenthal had expressed the opinion that, if there were a collapse in Turkey, the Great Powers should act in concert.

M. Isvolsky agreed to this, but he also thought the warning pointed to the existence of some secret agreement between Bulgaria and Austria.

E. G[REY].

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward Grey,

Vienna, August 9, 1909.

Last week Aehrenthal sent me a message that he would like to see me before I left for Marienbad; so on Saturday afternoon I went out to Schönbrunn to see him. He again expressed to me his regret that it had not been possible to bring about a meeting between the King and the Emperor, and he tried to explain to me that it would have been an unusual proceeding on the part of the Emperor to invite a foreign Sovereign to pay him a visit at his private villa at Ischl.⁽²⁾ He asserted that last year, when the King had desired on account of the Jubilee to give a little more importance to his visit to Ischl, the Emperor told Aehrenthal that in that case the meeting must take place at the Palace of Schönbrunn. Aehrenthal repeated to me that the Emperor received foreign Sovereigns at Ischl only in a private capacity but that he never invited them to come there. If he invited them—which was an official act—it was always to come to one of the Imperial Palaces. Aehrenthal assured me that whether a meeting took place or not, it would in no way affect the good relations which now existed between our two countries, nor would it change in any way the well-known affection which the Emperor entertained for the King.

Aehrenthal then passed to the main subject he wished to talk to me about, and that related to your recent speech in the House of Commons in answer to that of Sir Charles Dilke.⁽³⁾ He seemed to see in your speech remnants of a slight ill-feeling against Austria-Hungary on account of her action in the annexation question. I assured him that I thought he must be mistaken, and that the imperfect translations of fragments of your speech might have produced this unfavourable impression upon his mind. He replied that he hoped that the Bosnian question was now definitely settled and that its ghost would not be raised to produce any further friction between the two countries. He quite recognised that during the crisis two views were possible with regard to almost every point in dispute: we saw things from our point of view, he saw them from the Austrian side. We had mainly taken the defence of Turkish interests in the Bosnian question, but we could not deny that he had done his duty in looking after those of Austria alone. As to the form of the annexation and as to the opportunity of the time selected for carrying it out, he seemed to admit that differences of opinion might reasonably exist. Aehrenthal said to me that he thought it well that I should know the general impression produced upon his mind by your speech, but he did not desire me to think that he wished to make any official complaint with regard to it. There was one point, however, which he could not allow to pass without drawing my special attention to it: if he understood your speech correctly, you seemed to put an interpretation upon a letter written by Count Karolyi to Mr. Gladstone in the year 1880⁽³⁾ which he, Aehrenthal, as Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, could not permit to remain uncontroverted; it was impossible for the Austro-Hungarian Government to appear before the world as having broken an engagement given by their Ambassador in London to the British Government. If you meant to say in your speech that Count Karolyi had declared that Austria-Hungary repudiated the idea of annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina in the future, he was bound at the next meeting of the Delegations to refer to this matter and to give what he considered to be the correct interpretation of the Karolyi

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 2.]

⁽²⁾ [On July 15 Sir Fairfax Cartwright inquired whether an unofficial visit by King Edward to Ischl in August would be agreeable to the Emperor. Count von Aehrenthal, after consulting his master, replied that he would be glad to see the King if he expressed a wish to come. *v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, pp. 800-1, Nos. 862-3. This was not considered desirable, and the plan was given up. *v. O.-U.A.*, II, pp. 401-33, Nos. 1677-1712, *passim*.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 30-1, No. 26, and *notes* (1) and (2), pp. 43-4, No. 35, and *encl.*, and *notes* (1) and (2).]

letter. He did not wish to make an unnecessary fuss over this question of past history which was no longer of any practical value now that the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary was finally settled; still, as the matter had attracted a great deal of attention in political circles in this country, he was bound to give some justification of Austria-Hungary's conduct, and this would probably give rise to a regrettable renewal of controversies in the press of the two countries.

I gathered from what Aehrenthal said to me that he would be glad if you could find some opportunity of explaining that you did not mean, when referring to the Karolyi letter, to accuse the Austro-Hungarian Government of a breach of their engagements to Great Britain.⁽⁴⁾

According to the Austrian point of view the Karolyi declaration to Mr. Gladstone referred not to the question of the annexation—which, it was well known, would be carried out sooner or later, and was in those days at least apparently not objected to by Great Britain—but to a further advance of the Austro-Hungarian dominions in the direction of Mitrovitza and Salonica. Aehrenthal asserted to me that now, no more than formerly, had the Austro-Hungarian Government the slightest intention, in spite of all that might be said to the contrary, to advance upon Salonica. That does not exclude, however, the possibility of Austria-Hungary preventing Bulgaria from going there. I understood from Baron von Aehrenthal that Count Mensdorff had spoken to you on the matter of your speech, but I think he wished to speak to me himself about it, as I suspect he has some doubts whether Count Mensdorff has fully explained his views to you.

Yours truly,

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

MINUTE.

A full report of my speech would be the best answer and Count Mensdorff has it.

E. G.

⁽⁴⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 30–1, No. 26, and note ⁽²⁾; also *infra*, pp. 60–1, No. 56; pp. 70–1, No. 61; p. 80, No. 71.]

No. 39.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/779.

31664/31664/09/44A.

(No. 183.) Confidential.

Sir,

Marienbad, D. August 17, 1909.

R. August 23, 1909.

Monsieur Clemenceau came over on the 15th instant from Karlsbad to have luncheon with the King and in the course of conversation he observed that Monsieur Milovanowitch, the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs, was a man who could be relied on for when he passed through Paris in the early days of the Bosnian annexation crisis⁽¹⁾ he had assured Monsieur Clemenceau that under no circumstances would he drive Servian pretensions to the point of a war with Austria, and he had kept his word.

Monsieur Milovanowitch, who is doing a cure at Marienbad, called on me yesterday and I had with him a conversation of considerable length. In answer to an enquiry of mine His Excellency confirmed the statement made by Monsieur Clemenceau, and he declared that during the whole of the crisis he was determined to manœuvre in such manner that the Servian demands should not lead to a war. I asked him why in that case he had put them forward in so trenchant a manner. He said that the Servian statesmen were perfectly well aware that no compensation of any practical value was obtainable for their country, but public opinion demanded that something should be done and all that could be done was that Servian "amour-propre" should be flattered and that the Servian question should become one of international

⁽¹⁾ [For the Servian attitude at the time *v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, Subject Index, *sub* AUSTRIA-HUNGARY *Servian dispute with*.]

importance. I said to him that he had allowed matters to go almost too far, and that he had brought Austria and Servia within sight of war. He acknowledged that that was so but he then gave me to understand that when he realised that things were becoming too critical the Memorandum of Servian demands was put forward. This Memorandum had to serve two purposes, firstly, in order to satisfy public opinion in his country, it had presented to the world in a concrete form the national aspirations, secondly, in his own mind it served as a means of bringing about the combined pressure of the Powers at Belgrade to moderate Servian pretensions, and so enable public opinion to accept a peaceful and not too humiliating a solution of the dispute with Austria. Without the Memorandum the pressure of the Powers would not have been brought to bear upon Servia and she would therefore have been left to herself to meet an ultimatum from Austria.

I here asked him what were the present relations of Servia to Austria-Hungary. He replied that the effervescence against Austria-Hungary had greatly calmed down, and he told me that he had made arrangements to be received by Baron von Aehrenthal on the termination of his cure. There were two points he intended to discuss with Baron von Aehrenthal. The first regarded slight rectifications of the Austro-Servian frontier; the second related to the question of the Commercial Treaty. I told him with regard to the first point that from the language held to me by Baron von Aehrenthal, the question of the rectification of the frontier would probably be favourably considered. As regards the second point, I observed that he would find Baron von Aehrenthal personally inclined to meet Servian desires in a friendly spirit, but that the Agrarian Opposition was so powerful that it greatly tied his hands. Monsieur Milovanowitch said that this was just the point he wanted to ascertain. It was essential for him to know whether, if a Commercial Treaty were concluded with Austria-Hungary, there was a reasonable prospect of its being accepted by the two Parliaments. One thing was certain, and that was that without the admittance of a certain number of live-stock into this country, it was not worth Servia's while to try and negotiate a Treaty.

I have, &c.
(For the Ambassador),
A. AKERS DOUGLAS

No. 40.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 871/779.

81665/81664/09/44A.

(No. 134.) Confidential.

Sir,

Murienbad, D. August 17, 1909.

R. August 23, 1909.

With reference to my immediately preceding despatch⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to report that in the conversation which I had with M. Milovanovitch, the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday, His Excellency explained to me his views with regard to the future of the Balkan States. He said that the question which interested Servia most was the eventual fate of the Sanjak and this was a question which interested no one but Austria and Servia alone.

None of the other Balkan States had any pretensions [*sic*] to the Sanjak and Austria by an official declaration had renounced her interests in it. Therefore it seemed to him possible that, under certain circumstances, the Sanjak question might be solved in a manner favourable to Servian aspirations. If the Turkish Empire in Europe could hold together the question of the Sanjak would not be opened by Servia but things were going so badly at Constantinople that none of the smaller Balkan States for a moment believed that a Turkish dominion in Europe would last much longer. It was the duty of the Statesmen of these smaller States therefore constantly

(¹) [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

to bear in mind the instability of the Ottoman Empire and to work out for themselves a policy which will safeguard their interests under all eventualities. I said to M. Milovanovitch that I had always understood from Baron d'Aehrenthal and other leading Austrian political men that Austria-Hungary could not allow the Sanjak of Novi Bazar to belong to any other country but Turkey or herself. His Excellency replied that was undoubtedly the case but if the Ottoman Empire in Europe disappeared, would that not alter the situation? Austria-Hungary required the Sanjak in order to be in touch with Turkey but not in order to be in touch with the smaller Balkan States. All that was necessary for Austria was that the Sanjak should not be in the hands of a Power sufficiently strong to prevent her from receiving free communication with Salonica. For Austria, it was necessary that Salonica should be in weak hands just as it was a dogma of Russian policy that Constantinople should not be in the hands of a strong Power. M. Milovanovitch then developed his ideas with regard to the Sanjak problem and, as far as I was able to understand them, they amounted to this: that the Ottoman power has disappeared in Europe, and Bulgaria having advanced to the Ægean Sea, it seemed to him possible to obtain the consent of Austria to a cession to Serbia of the Sanjak with a strip of territory to the sea to the north of Albania. This territory might be neutralised and sufficient guarantees given to Austria for the security of her transit trade to Salonica. M. Milovanovitch suggested that Constantinople, Gallipoli and Salonica should be made free and independent cities similar to Hamburg under European guarantee. He was opposed to Salonica being ceded to Greece as such an arrangement would lead to permanent friction between Greece and Bulgaria, the one desiring to possess the Hinterland of Salonica and the other desiring to hold the chief seaport of Macedonia.

I then enquired of M. Milovanovitch whether he thought that the Albanians would offer any strong opposition to a Servian occupation of the Sanjak. He replied that although it was generally believed that the Albanians were hard fighters, he could assure me that although they were good in carrying on what he called "*une guerre individuelle*," they were no good for fighting in the open and against organized forces. He remarked that the Albanian guard at Constantinople of the late Sultan had showed no fight in the recent crisis and had been disbanded without difficulty.

Turning to the relations between Serbia and Bulgaria, M. Milovanovitch stated to me that although they were correct, they were not good. He added that it was difficult for any Balkan State to have really good relations with Bulgaria because that country was so restless and carried out her selfish policy with so little consideration for the interests of the other Balkan States.

I then asked him whether, in his opinion, any convention existed between Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary. He replied in the negative and added that one of the Bulgarian Ministers, a great personal friend of his, had stated to him that no such convention was in existence but that he did not know what engagements King Ferdinand might not have entered into with Baron d'Aehrenthal during the former's many visits to Vienna. The Bulgarian Minister had remarked, however, that any such engagements, if they existed, were not binding upon the Bulgarian Government and could be repudiated at any time if found necessary.

I have, &c.

(for the Ambassador),

A. AKERS DOUGLAS.

MINUTE.

It seems to me very visionary. I should have thought that, if the Ottoman Empire disappeared, Austria would insist not less but more strongly on taking the Sanjak. M. Milovanovitch thinks badly of the situation in Turkey.

H. N.
L. M.
E. G.

No. 41.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 371/779.

31187/30846/09/44.

Tel. (No. 551.)

Foreign Office. August 17, 1909, 5.20 P M

Turkish Ambassador, on instructions from his Gov[ernmen]t, asked me to-day whether question of Straits had been raised by M. Izvolski during his last visit.

I told H[is] E[xcellency] that no allusion whatever had been made to it since last year.⁽¹⁾

MINUTE

This is really correct for M. Izvolski only mentioned it incidentally as having been mentioned by him at Buchlau to Baron d'Aehrenthal in ? Sept[ember] or August, last year. he did not even refer to the subsequent discussions here last October, (which were known to the Porte at the time) and he did not discuss it at all.

E G

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 608); to Berlin (No. 270), to Vienna (No. 302); to Rome (No. 491), to St. Petersburg (No. 1162).]

No. 42.

*Mr. Findlay to Sir C. Hardinge*Private and Confidential.⁽¹⁾

My dear Hardinge,

Sofia, August 17, 1909.

Very many thanks for your letter of the 9th Aug[ust].

The colleague on whose authority I gave you the secret information contained in my letter of July 27th⁽²⁾ has such a vivid imagination that I have been on the look-out for an opportunity of checking it from some independent source. A few days ago I went out shooting with an Austrian friend (starting at 3 A.M.!). We didn't get much, but during the long drive home I got him to discuss very frankly the ill-feeling between our respective countries last autumn. I told him that the line taken by our press was largely due to the belief that Austria had acted in collusion with Bulgaria. Personally I had never believed that this was the case, but he must admit that the general public could hardly be blamed for drawing what appeared to be an obvious deduction from the facts known to them.

My friend replied—"Such an idea could never have obtained credence if the truth had been known about Prince Ferdinand's visit to Pesth. I will tell you, in confidence, that Prince Ferdinand left Pesth in a state of blind fury with the Emperor and everything Austrian. So much so that when the old Emperor was standing on the steps of the palace and saluted the Prince on his departure, Ferdinand merely returned the salute in the most insolent and perfunctory manner, without even looking towards the Emperor, and drove off without attempting to conceal his rage."

My Austrian friend is certain to have known what passed at Pesth, and his story, as far as it goes, entirely confirms the account I have already given you. I think it is proved not only that there was no collusion between Austria and Bulgaria, but that Prince Ferdinand entirely upset all Aehrenthal's (and Iswolsky's) calculations by his sudden determination to declare the Independence of Bulgaria.

Y[ou]rs ever.

M. de C. FINDLAY.

MINUTE.

The remark of the Austrian Ambassador at Paris that the Bulgarian declaration would precede the Austrian contributed largely to the impression that there was collusion

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [Hardinge MSS., Vol. I of 1909.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *Ed. note*, immediately succeeding.]

[*ED. NOTE*—In a letter of July 27 to Sir C. Hardinge (Hardinge MSS., Vol. I of 1909), Mr. Findlay reported an account of the visit of Prince Ferdinand to Vienna in September 1908, which was given him by one of his colleagues. Apparently the Bulgarian code cypher was known to the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office, so that all telegrams between Prince Ferdinand and his Ministers were read in Vienna. This would make it possible for Prince Ferdinand's intentions to be known in Vienna, as Count Khevenhüller's statement that the Bulgarian Declaration of Independence would precede the Austro-Hungarian annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina implies that they were, while at the same time Count von Aehrenthal could state definitely that there had been no understanding between Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria and that the subject had not been discussed. For Count Aehrenthal's account of his conversations with Prince Ferdinand at Budapest on September 23-24, v. *O.T.*, I, p. 97, No. 87.]

No. 43.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/779.

31378/30846/09/44A.

(No. 341.) Confidential.

Sir,

Paris, D. August 18, 1909.

R. August 20, 1909.

In the course of conversation with Monsieur Louis to-day I mentioned to him that the Turkish Ambassador in London had on instructions from the Porte inquired whether the question of the Straits had been raised by the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs during his visit to England and that you had been able to assure the Ambassador that no allusion whatever had been made to it (see your Telegram No. 608 of yesterday).⁽¹⁾ and I asked Monsieur Louis whether the subject had been discussed at Cherbourg during the visit of the Emperor of Russia. His Excellency said that he was present at nearly all the conversations that had taken place at Cherbourg and the question had not so far as he knew been mentioned and he did not think that Monsieur Isvolsky had spoken of it in private conversation with Monsieur Pichon.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 50, No. 41. and note (¹).]

No. 44.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/780.

32468/32468/09/44A.

(No. 471A.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. August 20, 1909.

R. August 30, 1909.

The Servian Minister came to see me yesterday and gave expression to some rather gloomy forebodings with regard to coming events in the Balkans. He said that he was persuaded that during the stay of King Ferdinand and the Bulgarian Prime Minister and Minister of War in Vienna some understanding had been come to, though very likely nothing was committed to paper, as to military co-operation between Austria and Bulgaria in Macedonia. A significant article had recently been published by a paper in touch with the Bulgarian Government expressing approval of an understanding of that kind with Austria. I said that M. Tzokow had recently declared very positively that no Bulgarian Statesmen would follow King Ferdinand in a policy of *rapprochement* with Austria, even though His Majesty might personally be in favour of it. M. Popovitch replied that no doubt there was a school of politicians in Bulgaria

who held the views expressed by M. Tzokow, but the men now in power belonged to the party which had made war on Serbia and they still favoured an anti-Servian policy, which His Excellency seemed to consider meant a pro-Austrian policy also. Serbia, His Excellency went on to say, had recently shown her readiness to enter into closer relations with Bulgaria, but the Bulgarian inspired press had intimated that that was possible only if Serbia renounced all ambitions in Macedonia, which, M. Popovitch added, was tantamount to rejecting the Servian advances. M. Tzokow had recently stated that the so-called Servians in Macedonia were nothing but serbified Bulgars. It would be equally true, His Excellency remarked with bitterness, to say that the Bulgars were bulgarised Serbs.

In speaking of Serbia's ambitions in Macedonia, which she never could renounce, I understand M. Popovitch to have referred to the pretensions [*sic*] to the valley of the Wardar which Serbia was, I believe, encouraged by Austria to put forward in the time of King Milan, and which have hitherto proved a source of irreconcilable difference between Bulgaria and herself.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

No. 45.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Rumbold.

F.O. 371/779.

32057/30846/09/44.

(No. 145.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 20, 1909.

The Japanese Ambassador asked me to-day whether M. Iswolsky, during his visit here, had said anything about the question of the Straits. The question of the opening of the Straits was no longer so important to Japan as it had been at one time, but it still had a certain importance for her.

I told him that the question had not been discussed at all during M. Iswolsky's visit here. When the question was discussed last October,⁽¹⁾ I had told M. Iswolsky that we could not object in principle to a modification of the terms of the Treaty which closed the Straits, though it would be necessary to have agreement as to the conditions on which the Straits might eventually be opened, and we could not object if the Russian Government wished to approach the Turkish Government on the subject. But I had deprecated a discussion at that time, as I felt sure it would be embarrassing to Turkey, and the subject had dropped, the Russian Government having come to the conclusion that the time was inopportune. As M. Iswolsky had not mentioned the subject on the occasion of the recent visit, I supposed that the Russian Government still considered the time to be inopportune. It was possible that the subject might be mentioned when the Czar met the Sultan later on this year, but the Russians had not said anything about this to us. As, however, Turkey had recently made some concessions with regard to Bosnia and Bulgaria, I did not think it was likely that she would be willing to make any further concessions for some time.

I am, &c.

E. G[REY].

(¹) [*v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, p. 441, No. 377; pp. 451-2, No. 387; p. 456, No. 394.]

No. 46.

Sir G Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/779.

32543/30846/09/44.

(No. 681.) Confidential.

Sir,

*Therapia, D. August 21, 1909.**R. August 30, 1909.*

After the recent visit of the Emperor of Russia to Cowes the report was put about that the question of the opening of the Straits had been mooted on that occasion. Public opinion does not appear to have taken the report seriously and the papers have for the most part confined themselves to giving the history of the question without offering any comment on the advisability or possibility of the Straits being opened to all Powers or to the Black Sea Riverain States only.

Rifaat Pasha has only once enquired of me whether the question had been discussed at Cowes and I told him that as far as I knew it had not. Since then he will have received your statement⁽¹⁾ that the subject was not discussed. To one of my Colleagues Rifaat Pasha observed that neither the general opening of the Straits nor the limited opening could ever be acceptable to Turkey. If the Straits were open to Russia alone Turkey would be at her mercy while if open to all the Powers Turkey would lose her privileged geographical position.

One of the outspoken Turkish journals however in discussing the question, declares that though Turkey is custodian of the Straits, the question is one which interests her infinitely less than it does Russia and England. If, it argues, any Power wished to attack Constantinople by Sea neither the Treaty of Paris nor any other would prevent it. What Turkey should rely on is not articles to treaties but a strong fleet, and the journal takes this opportunity for lamenting that the Government did not give effect to Admiral Gamble's demands and deplores the parsimony with which the Navy is treated.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

MINUTE.

Recent experiences have made the Turks distrust the binding power of treaties.

H. N.
L. M.
E. G.⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 50, No. 41.]

No. 47.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/779.

32473/30846/09/44A.

(No. 476.)

Sir,

*St. Petersburg, D. August 25, 1909.**R. August 30, 1909.*

A rumour became current here a few days ago to the effect that the question of the Straits would be reopened on the occasion of the approaching meeting between the Emperor and the Sultan of Turkey.⁽¹⁾ The immediate foundation of the report was evidently the knowledge that the Emperor's yacht would necessarily be escorted through the Bosphorus by one or more war-ships, and there is also no doubt a certain general air of probability about the conjecture that something will be said, on the forthcoming occasion, to the Turkish Government on the subject of the Straits.

⁽¹⁾ [Reference to proposed Russo-Turkish discussions on the Straits question in October 1908 is made in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, pp. 454-5, No. 391.]

I asked M. Sazonow whether it was correct as stated in the papers that M. Tcharykow had applied for permission for two war-ships to escort the Imperial Yacht through the Straits. His Excellency replied that permission to pass the Straits had been asked only for the "Almaz," a very small cruiser, which would accompany the Emperor; the yacht would probably be met at the entrance to the Dardanelles by the "Oleg," which is now in Cretan waters, but it was not proposed that the "Oleg" should enter the Straits. His Excellency disclaimed all notion on the part of the Russian Government of reopening the general question.

The "Novoe Vremya" published an article on the 8/16th instant maintaining that the restrictions placed on Russia's rights of ingress and egress in regard to the Black Sea were an anachronism which could no longer be tolerated. Proceeding to refer to a report that if Russia's right to free passage were recognised Austria and Germany would claim a corresponding right to send their war-ships into the Black Sea, the "Novoe Vremya" argued with great vehemence that the Black Sea was nothing but a Russo-Turkish lake, and that the claim of foreign Powers to send war-ships into it was preposterous. Other and more sober voices have however also made themselves heard in the Russian press, pointing out that if the principle of the closing of the Straits were once dropped the claim of foreign Powers to send their fleets into the Black Sea might probably be made good, and that the result would be more disadvantageous to Russia in the present state of her naval preparations than the *status quo*. It is I think clear that public opinion in this country would view the appearance of foreign vessels of war in the Black Sea with the greatest apprehension and dislike, and that if it had to choose between such a solution and the maintenance of the existing arrangements, it would unhesitatingly pronounce in favour of the latter.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

No. 48.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/601.
33322/30980/09/3.
Tel. (No. 164.)

Vienna, September 4, 1909.

D. 8.30 P.M.

R. 10.30 P.M.

I saw M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] this afternoon directly after my return from Marienbad. He said that the King's kind thought in sending a special envoy with an autograph letter on the Emperor's birthday to Ischl produced best impressions in Austria and had profoundly touched H[is] I[mperial] M[ajesty]. He expressed his conviction that these signs of friendship would finally dispose of the unfortunate legend which had been circulated by press that the meeting at Ischl last year⁽¹⁾ had created a coolness between the two Monarchs. M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] expressed his great satisfaction at the excellent relations now existing between H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] and the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernment] and he hoped that nothing in the future would disturb them. He said that he desired as far as possible to co-operate with G[reat] Britain in the Near Eastern questions.

⁽¹⁾ [n. Gooch & Temperley, Vol. V, pp 804-5, No 868; pp. 827-30, App. IV.]

No. 49.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey

F.O. 371/779.
 33323/30846/09/44A.
 Tel. (No. 165.)

Vienna, September 4, 1909.
 D. 8.30 P.M.
 R. 10.30 P.M.

In talking to me today M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] alluded to the rumour that the Czar would visit Constantinople⁽¹⁾ on his way to Italy & expressed his astonishment that Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] should sanction such a visit so opposed to Russian tradition & popular sentiment. No Czar had ever before thought of entering Constantinople except as conqueror.

On the other hand M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] thought that if the difficulties of a visit could not be overcome and the Czar passed through the Bosphorus without touching at Constantinople a very painful impression would be produced in Young Turk circles.

I gathered therefore from H[is] E[xc]cellency's language that he is of opinion that the choice of the Constantinople route to Italy would be a mistake.

(¹) *cp. supra*, pp 53-4, No 47.]

No. 50.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/780.
 33811/33811/09/44A.
 (No. 143.) Confidential.
 Sir,

Vienna, D. September 5, 1909.
 R. September 8, 1909.

I have the honour to report that Monsieur Milovanowitch, the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs, was received by Count Aehrenthal a few days ago for the first time since the beginning of the crisis which arose out of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁽¹⁾ When I saw Count Aehrenthal yesterday he at once told me that he had seen the Servian Minister, and that he was glad that he had done so, as it was better for the two Governments to come again into touch with each other. He told me that when Monsieur Milovanowitch entered the room he had at once said to him that it would be better if they both avoided discussing the past and kept to the present. According to Count Aehrenthal, he informed Monsieur Milovanowitch of the friendly dispositions of the Austro-Hungarian Government towards Servia, and of his own personal desire that good relations should be maintained in future between the two countries.

I have no doubt from the language held to me by Monsieur Milovanowitch at Marienbad that he reciprocated these sentiments and expressed his intention to cultivate good relations with Vienna. He may have personal reasons for doing so for it is generally believed here that, should he retire from the post of Foreign Minister at Belgrade, he has a desire to be named Servian Minister in this capital. Count Aehrenthal told me that he discussed with Monsieur Milovanowitch the question of the rectification of the frontiers along the Drina valley, and that he had informed him that Austria-Hungary would meet the Servian claims in a most conciliatory spirit; in fact, he assured me that the new frontier line he was proposing was more advantageous to Servia than to Austria-Hungary. On this small question, remarked Count Aehrenthal, he had no desire to pick a quarrel with Servia, or to let the Austro-Hungarian Government appear to be grasping. According to Count

(¹) [For Count von Aehrenthal's account of the conversation of August 29 v *O.-U.A.*, II, pp. 453-6. No. 1727.]

Aehrenthal, however, the important question between Austria-Hungary and Servia was that of the Commercial Treaty, and this, I understood, was discussed at length with Monsieur Milovanowitch. His Excellency declared to me that it was as much in Austria-Hungary's interests as in those of Servia that such a Treaty should be concluded without loss of time, and as regards agrarian opposition in this country to the conclusion of such a Treaty, he declared that he himself was not without hopes that it might be overcome. I may mention here that Count Aehrenthal has just sent an official of the Ministry of Commerce to Budapest to negotiate there with the Hungarian Government on these matters.

Count Aehrenthal gave me to understand that Monsieur Milovanowitch in the course of his interview, had broached the question of the Sanjak to him. The reply he received was that His Excellency was aware that the Sanjak belonged to Turkey and to nobody else,⁽²⁾ and that as far as his information went he saw no reasons for supposing that the Turkish dominions in Europe were likely to be reduced for the present. Count Aehrenthal told me that he had given Monsieur Milovanowitch the following advice, namely that in his opinion the Balkan States were too inclined to put forward pretensions to territories which did not belong to them;⁽³⁾ they did this no doubt in order to excite agitation among and to cause anxiety to the European Powers with the evident intention to magnify their importance from an international point of view. If they consulted their own real interests, said Count Aehrenthal, they would limit their political horizon to their actual present frontiers. Internal affairs constituted their proper field of action, and if their Governments had at heart the real interests of their people, they would exert themselves to the utmost to develop the resources of these States and strive to maintain peace in the Near East instead of keeping the civilised world in a continual state of fear that war might at any moment break out in that part of Europe.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

(2) [Marginal comment unsigned. "Up till lately we thought the same about Bosnia and the Herzegovina, and it did not appear likely that the Turkish dominion 'would be replaced' by their seizure."]

(3) [Marginal comment unsigned. "This is rather cynical."]

No. 51.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/763.

33677/659/09/44.

Tel. (No. 314.)

Constantinople, D. September 6, 1909, 10 P.M.

R. September 7, 1909, 8 A.M.

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] told me today he was about to approach you through Turkish Amb[assador] in London regarding the 4% increase in customs.⁽¹⁾ I said that I was sure that you would give it a favourable reception especially as Turkish Gov[ernment] had undertaken not to use receipts for concession already (? group omitted: ? provided) for viz. [sic] Bagdad Railway but that I felt that your consent would be more likely to be readily given if the customs reforms promised under the 3% engagement especially regarding the bonded warehouses were in a fair way (of) being carried out. Also if the reduction of the sanitary dues were finally accorded & if Lynch concession were definitely granted but I did not mention these as necessary conditions to acceptance.

(1) [The text of the *aide-mémoire* upon this subject communicated by Tawfik Pasha on September 14 is printed in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. VI, pp. 375-6, No. 273. The question of the 4% increase in customs is dealt with fully in the adjoining documents in that volume.]

I said that you might impose as a condition that 50% of every loan contracted on increased yield should go to London of course on equal terms with the best offer.

I did not mention withdrawal of veto on borrowing power of Egypt as Grand Vizir had just told me that he would submit a proposal on the subject to Khedive on Thursday.

Turkish M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] said that Crawford had full powers to carry out reforms. He added that he was in favour of Lynch scheme & saw no objection to proposal regarding loan.

No. 52.

Communication from M. Gruic of September 7, 1909.

F.O. 371/606.

38796/28101/09/39.

Légation Royale de Serbie, Londres, Août, 1909.

Traduction d'une circulaire du Ministère Royal des Affaires Etrangères relative à l'action entreprise en vue d'une entente serbo-bulgare.

Afin de donner une idée exacte des relations actuelles serbo-bulgares, dans le présent court aperçu historique ont été exposés les éléments les plus importants caractérisant ces relations. L'exposé de ces éléments comprend deux périodes : (I) de la guerre russo-japonaise jusqu'aux événements en Turquie au mois d'Avril de cette année; (II) des événements d'Avril en Turquie jusqu'à ce jour. . . .⁽¹⁾

D'après les faits ci-dessus cités il ressort que non seulement les efforts de la Serbie en vue de la conclusion d'une entente serbo-bulgare n'ont pas reçu d'accueil favorable de la part des facteurs compétents bulgares, mais encore que toutes les anciennes difficultés suscitées à la conclusion de cette entente par le gouvernement bulgare, existent encore aujourd'hui. Il est cependant consolant de remarquer que tous les hommes politiques bulgares ne sont pas solidaires avec la politique menée par la Bulgarie officielle et que les plus importants et les plus autorisés parmi eux ont des idées tout à fait différentes sur les questions ayant une influence directe sur le caractère et le développement des relations serbo-bulgares. C'est dans cette constatation que réside encore l'espoir que l'entente serbo-bulgare n'est pas irréalisable.

Mais il est évident que dans les circonstances qui viennent d'être exposées, la Serbie n'a pu que cesser toute tentative en vue d'un rapprochement, car toute nouvelle démarche de sa part aurait été contraire à sa dignité et en même temps non seulement inutile mais même nuisible pour le but poursuivi. Depuis que, en conformité de cette décision, toute conversation diplomatique et toute polémique de presse sur ce sujet du côté serbe ont cessé, il semble qu'un revirement soit survenu en Bulgarie, pour le moment dans la presse seulement, mais la possibilité n'est pas exclue qu'il se produise aussi dans les cercles officiels. Le gouvernement serbe serait de toutes façons heureux de ce revirement et il espère qu'il s'accomplira—tant en considération des circonstances générales dans les Balkans qu'en celle des intérêts bulgares eux-mêmes—à moins que la Bulgarie ne se soit déjà définitivement liée avec l'Autriche-Hongrie. Dans tous les cas ce serait maintenant l'instant psychologique pour les puissances amicalement disposées, qui souhaitent la réalisation de l'entente serbo-bulgare d'employer toute leur influence auprès du gouvernement bulgare dans ce sens.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [It has not seemed necessary to reproduce the lengthy historical survey of Serbo-Bulgar relations which follows.]

⁽²⁾ [This communication was repeated to Belgrade in Sir Edward Grey's despatch No. 44; to Sofia (No. 47); and to Constantinople (No. 287).]

MINUTES.

Sir E. Grey

1 The Servian Chargé d'Affaires called to deliver a circular note addressed to the Powers on the subject of Servian endeavours to come to an understanding with Bulgaria.

He said that they had not been successful and that the prospects were not hopeful because Bulgaria was already engaged to Austria. They had declared their independence after coming to an understanding with Austria and it was useless to expect them to take any step which might be disagreeable to her.

I said that our reports did not show any symptoms of a closer rapprochement between Bulgaria and Austria and asked whether Macedonia and Servian claims there, did not constitute a greater difficulty to a better understanding. He admitted that this was the case to some extent ⁽³⁾

2 He then said that the Adriatic Railway project was again coming to the fore and asked that Sir G. Lowther might have instructions to join his French, Russian and Italian colleagues in recommending it to the Porte when the moment came ⁽⁴⁾

L. M.
Sept. 7.

We shall have to act with the French, Russian and Italian Ambassadors in this matter
E. G.

⁽³⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 59-60, No. 54.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*v. infra*, p. 60, No. 55.]

No. 53.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/783.

35751/35751/09/38.

(No. 495.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. September 12, 1909.

R. September 27, 1909.

I called on Monsieur Stolypine to-day, and conversed with him on a variety of subjects. I said that his absence from Cowes had been much regretted as both the Prime Minister and yourself would have been glad to have made his acquaintance. His Excellency replied that he had also regretted that he had been unable to accompany the Emperor, but he was glad to have learnt from His Majesty that the visit had been an unqualified success, and that His Majesty had been much pleased to have had an opportunity of meeting some of the leading members of His Majesty's Government. His Majesty's conversations with yourself had greatly gratified the Emperor. Monsieur Stolypine enquired whether the members of the Duma delegation to London had made a favourable impression; and I was able to assure him that such had been the case. He observed that they were a very good representative body of men, and he had been pleased that they had had opportunities of mixing with so many English political and social personages. It was a good education to all of them, and the effect which the visit has caused among the Russian public had been most satisfactory. It was true that the Extreme Right parties were discontented; but the latter were strongly opposed to any understanding with England, and were sturdy advocates for an alliance with Germany. They were continually preaching that no trust should be placed in perfidious Albion, and that the policy of England was to sow dissensions between Russia and her western neighbour, hoping thereby to weaken Germany before the inevitable struggle took place between the two rivals for maritime supremacy. It was unfortunate that Germany and England could not come to some understanding as to moderating the pace in naval construction, as this continued increase in armaments was by no means a guarantee for peace but rather an incentive to war. The burdens which were thrown on Germany were great, and discontent in that country was growing, and the day might arrive when the

Government would have to justify the enormous expenditure on naval armaments by endeavouring to secure the prize for the attainment of which these armaments had been undertaken. He understood from the Emperor that the German Emperor was for the present pacifically disposed, and was in a chastened frame of mind. This mood if it lasted was satisfactory.

Monsieur Stolypine said that though the situation in South Eastern Europe was for the present comparatively calm he was not reassured as to the future. The outlook in Turkey was obscure and doubtful, and he had no confidence whatever in Austria. Count d'Aehrenthal was not a statesman in whom any trust could be placed, and he might give us all some fresh surprises when he considered a favourable opportunity had arrived. The exceedingly close union between Germany and Austria-Hungary was in a sense disquieting, as they would doubtless always make common cause, and though Germany might wish to remain quiescent, Austria might drag her on into some adventures. King Ferdinand was a factor which required watching. He had been profuse when in St. Petersburg in the spring in assertions of his determination to co-operate closely with Russia and to be her faithful adherent in all Balkan affairs, but he had apparently subsequently engaged in some very suspicious flirtations with Austria-Hungary. He considered King Ferdinand to be exceedingly clever and exceedingly untrustworthy. Then there were the Macedonian and the Cretan questions, and the situation in Greece: all subjects out of which troubles might arise. Persia too was a source of great anxiety, and the attitude of the Persian Government towards Russia was most regrettable. The Persian Government seemed to wish to emphasise in every possible way their desire to diminish Russia's prestige and to cause her annoyance. There did not appear to be a single individual in Persia capable of mastering the situation, and the country seemed to be drifting helplessly about. The Russian Government would withdraw their troops as soon as circumstances permitted: and on this point Monsieur Stolypine was not quite so positive as his brother-in-law Monsieur Sazonow or as could have been wished. The internal situation in France did not appear to him to be at all satisfactory: and the socialistic elements in that country appeared to be obtaining the upper hand. . . .⁽¹⁾

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

(1) [The rest of the despatch concerns the domestic politics of Russia.]

No. 54.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Hamilton.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/606.

33796/28101/09/39.

(No. 44.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 16, 1909.

The Servian Chargé d'Affaires called at this Office on the 7th instant and left with Mr. Mallet a circular note addressed to the Powers copy of which is enclosed herewith⁽²⁾ on the subject of Servian endeavours to come to an understanding with Bulgaria.

M. Grouitch said that these endeavours had not been successful and that the prospects of such an understanding were not hopeful because Bulgaria was already engaged to Austria-Hungary. She had declared her independence after coming to an understanding with that Power and it was useless to expect her to take any steps which might be disagreeable to the latter.

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch was repeated to Sofia (No. 47); to Constantinople (No. 287).]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 57, No. 52.]

M. Grouitch explained that the only action which the Servian Gov[ernmen]t expected H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] to take in the matter was to instruct H[is] M[ajesty's] R[epresentative] at Sofia would [*sic* to] drop a hint from time to time to Bulgarian statesmen that an entente between the Balkan Powers would be viewed with satisfaction by Great Britain.

Mr. Mallet said that the reports received by H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] gave no indication that a close rapprochement had been effected between Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, and he asked whether Servian claims in Macedonia did not constitute a greater difficulty to a better understanding between the two Balkan States.

M. Grouitch admitted that this was the case to some extent.

I should be glad to receive any observations which you may have to offer on the enclosed communication.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

No. 55.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. R. Hamilton.

F.O. 371/606.

33796/28101/09/39.

(No. 45.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 16, 1909.

In his interview with Mr. Mallet on the 7th inst[ant] which forms the subject of my desp[atch] No. 44 of the (?) inst[ant],⁽¹⁾ the Servian Chargé d'Affaires stated that the project for a railway from the Danube to the Adriatic Sea was again about to be brought forward, and he requested that H[is] M[ajesty's] Ambassador at Constantinople might be instructed to join his French, Russian, and Italian colleagues in recommending it to the Porte when the moment arrived.

I have addressed instructions in this sense to Sir G. Lowther.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [*v.* immediately preceding document, *v.* also *supra*, p. 58, No. 52, *min.*]

No. 56.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 371/780.

34598/34598/09/44.

(No. 101.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 21, 1909.

As y[our] E[xcellency] is aware, in the debate which took place in the House of Commons on the 22nd July⁽¹⁾ on the Foreign Office vote, I had occasion to quote the following passage from a letter addressed by Mr. Gladstone on the 4th May 1880 to the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at this court:—

“Y[our] E[xcellency] is now good enough to assure us that your Gov[ernment] has no desire whatever to extend or add to the rights acquired under the Treaty of Berlin, and that any such extension would be actually prejudicial to Austria-Hungary.”

⁽¹⁾ [*v.* *supra*, pp. 30–1, No. 26, and note ⁽²⁾.]

When I quoted this passage I expressly added that I did not bring up this assurance as entailing any present obligation upon Austria-Hungary. The Austro-Hungarian Chargé d'Affaires has, however, pressed upon me somewhat insistently a contention of Count von Aehrenthal that the assurance never had any relation to Bosnia and the Herzegovina, but did apply to a further advance towards Salonica,—a contention which gives to what passed in 1880 a force which I had not thought of claiming for it, but which, of course, I am willing that it should continue to possess—and as H[is] E[xcellency] was desirous that some public statement should be made on the subject, and asked me to agree to one such as he could make to the Delegations, I suggested to the Chargé d'Affaires the enclosed form of words, which seemed to embody what H[is] E[xcellency] wished to say, without imputing to me language which I had not employed.⁽²⁾

On the 18th instant Count Tarnowski informed me that Count von Aehrenthal was satisfied with the proposed formula, and that H[is] E[xcellency] intended to express himself accordingly to the Delegations.

I am, &c.
E. G[REY].

Enclosure in No. 56.

Formula handed by Sir Edward Grey to Count Tarnowski.

Sir Edward Grey expressly stated in his speech that he did not quote the assurances given to Mr. Gladstone by Count Karolyi in 1880 as entailing an obligation upon Austria-Hungary with reference to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These assurances were never intended to apply to Bosnia and Herzegovina but only to an advance beyond these provinces. After an exchange of views with Sir Edward Grey I have ascertained that he entirely accepts this view of them.⁽³⁾

⁽²⁾ [The substance of this paragraph was sent to Sir F. Cartwright in a private letter from Sir Edward Grey of September 7, i.e., the same day as his interview with Count Tarnowski. (F.O. 371/780. 34598/34593/09/44)]

⁽³⁾ [Marginal note by Mr. Mallet: "A copy of this was handed to the Austrian Chargé d'Affaires on Sept[ember] 7, 1909. L. M."]

No. 57.

Mr. Findlay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/606.

36590/35918/09/7.

(No. 87.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sofia, D. September 23, 1909.

R. October 4, 1909.

With reference to my despatch No. 86 of the 21st instant,⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to report the substance of what the King of the Bulgarians said to me on the subject of the political situation in the course of the conversation which followed the delivery of my credentials.

As I have already reported, His Majesty spoke English throughout this conversation, only occasionally lapsing into French, in order to express Himself more clearly.

The King avoided going into detail.—In speaking of the general situation in Europe, His Majesty described it as "not being particularly rosy." I admitted that there were elements of trouble in several countries, but pointed out that the general

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It reported the reception in "solemn audience" of Mr. Findlay by the King of the Bulgarians on September 21. (F.O. 371/606. 35918/35918/09/7.)]

desire for peace, which I believed to exist, was a satisfactory feature. His Majesty acquiesced, and asked what His Majesty's Government thought of the situation in Turkey. I replied that you sincerely hoped that the Constitutional Régime would justify the sympathy it had received in the United Kingdom, and that the Turkish Government would honestly endeavour to reform their administration and to establish order and good government throughout the Empire. It was obvious that these reforms must be a matter of time. The Turkish Government would have to discover, and perhaps even to train, its local administrators. In the meantime you hoped that they would be given a fair chance, and that the interests of peace might be secured by an improvement in the relations of the Balkan States with each other and with the Ottoman Empire.

The King agreed that this was devoutly to be desired, and added that in the meantime the first object of the Turkish Government should be to avoid giving occasion for Foreign intervention. It did not transpire from which quarter His Majesty considered "Foreign intervention" as most likely to come. The King added that a quiet winter might in any case be anticipated, and that during that time "a programme might be developed."

As I have already stated, His Majesty avoided going into detail, and gave me the impression that He was watching the progress of events in Turkey, and that He intends to maintain an attitude of expectancy until it becomes clear what policy the Turkish Government will ultimately adopt as regards their Bulgarian subjects and neighbours.

At the same time, in discussing the possible introduction of order and impartiality into the Turkish Administration, His Majesty appeared to me to speak without conviction, and He probably shares the opinion of the majority of His subjects that the methods of the Constitutional Régime will differ very slightly, if at all, from those of the late Sultan; that no real effort to introduce impartial government will be made, and that a break down is only a matter of time.

I have, &c.

M. DE C. FINDLAY.

No. 58.

Mr. R. Hamilton to Sir Edward Grey

F.O. 371/606.

36640/28101/09/39.

(No. 86.) Confidential.

Sir,

Belgrade, D. September 27, 1909.

R. October 4, 1909.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Despatch No. 44 of the 16th Instant,⁽¹⁾ enclosing a circular note addressed by the Servian Government to their representatives abroad on the subject of their endeavours to come to an understanding with Bulgaria.

In my Despatch No. 75 of the 22nd July⁽²⁾ last I reported that I had heard at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs that such a circular would shortly be sent, and in conversation with Monsieur Milovanovitch on the 25th Instant I told him that a French translation of the note had been forwarded to me and that Monsieur Grouitch had been informed that His Majesty's Government had not received any indication of a closer rapprochement having been effected between Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria. His Excellency declared himself to be of the same opinion; he did not

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 59-60, No. 54.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced, as the relevant part is sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 371/733. 28082/1288/09/59.)]

think that Bulgaria wished to come to a definite arrangement with Austria directed against Serbia, but her attitude appeared to him to be due to a desire to obtain some ultimate advantage from the present relations between Austria and Serbia. This he thought was a mistake on the part of Bulgaria, since the objects which Austria had in view were clear enough, but he did not see what good Bulgaria would do herself by trying to put pressure on Serbia from the other side. He had issued this circular in the hope that the Powers friendly disposed to Serbia might say a word at Sofia which would tend to ease the relations between the two countries.

Monsieur Milovanovitch then said that he had no great belief in the maintenance of the new regime in Turkey, whose difficulties seemed almost insuperable, and he anticipated that a break-down must occur sooner or later. Suggestions had recently been conveyed to him of what the Bulgarian Government considered the proper solution of a Turkish collapse. This was that Macedonia should become an autonomous State, while Serbia would realise her aspirations in Novi-Bazar and Old Serbia, by which he meant all the country to the north of the Shar Dag. But since an autonomous Government in a country containing such a mixed population could not be expected to last long, it would be advisable for Serbia and Bulgaria to settle their spheres of influence beforehand. The sphere which Serbia considered hers would be roughly bounded by a line drawn from Vranja to Demir Kapu on the Vardar and thence a line due west. I remarked that this sphere would include the Sanjak of Uscub, which was the principal cause of difference between the two countries. His Excellency answered that this was so, but he thought they might come to [an] understanding when Bulgaria realized that Serbia had no intention of trying to push farther towards the Ægean than Demir Kapu; and also, that Serbia had a clear claim to Uscub, since the majority of the population was undoubtedly Servian. I believe that at Sofia it is considered undoubtedly Bulgarian, and so an agreement on this point will not be easily reached. There was one condition, Monsieur Milovanovitch added on which Serbia would have to insist, namely that Salonica should be a free port and that there should be free access to it; otherwise Bulgaria might do what she liked in her own sphere. I asked His Excellency if the Bulgarian Government had made any definite proposals of this nature, and he said that they had not, but, as it were, had only whispered them: although he had some conversation with the Bulgarian Minister, who is now absent on leave, he did not wish to write anything, but he would discuss the matter if he came to London next month.

I could not help observing that all this looked like a dream very far from realization, and His Excellency said that no doubt at first sight such ideas seemed "des fantaisies," but if they were considered their realization would not be impossible. Supposing that in two or three years' time a catastrophe occurred in Turkey, an event of which he appeared to be pretty confident, what would happen? The Great Powers might settle the question as they thought convenient, without much consideration for the Balkan States. But if Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro were in complete agreement the matter would be very different. It would be essential for Serbia to occupy Novi Bazar and thereby effect a junction with Montenegro; the Austrians would object. Very well, let them come and take it; and to do so they would have to put at least half a million men on the frontier. In fact after their schemes of rearmament had been carried out, the united forces of the three countries would be strong enough to make any Power think twice before attacking them.

I have ventured to report His Excellency's remarks because he told me that he would repeat them if he came to London, and also because they probably represent the limit of Servian ambitions. In his despatch No. 143 Confidential of September 5,⁽³⁾ Sir F. Cartwright reported Count Aehrenthal's account of his interview with Monsieur Milovanovitch during the latter's visit to Vienna. The advice which Count Aehrenthal gave Monsieur Milovanovitch on that occasion cannot

(³) [*v. supra*, pp. 55-6, No. 50.]

have had much effect if the Servians really have serious thoughts of claiming all this territory which does not belong to them. It seems clear that they cherish hopes of reviving the ancient glories of the Empire of Dushan, an idea which first took shape in the time of King Milan, and that their dreams of expansion have not been checked by the events of last spring. But the first step towards the fulfilment of these aspirations must be a complete understanding with Bulgaria and the Servians may have some such wild schemes in their heads while trying to improve their relations with their neighbour. So far they do [not] seem to have been very successful, and there can be little chance of Bulgaria thinking of joining hands with them unless she is assured of a break-up of the Turkish Empire, and also of the stability of the present regime in Serbia, untroubled by internal disturbances.

I may add that at an audience which the King was pleased to grant me to-day, His Majesty remarked that Serbia would have to make serious sacrifices for such a small country in order to provide herself with the requisite means of defence. The negotiations for a loan in Paris had been unsuccessful in the summer but they would shortly be renewed. The money would not be given on easy terms, but it was absolutely necessary for Serbia to get it so as to reorganize her Army. The Servians were excellent raw material and could become good soldiers after a comparatively short period of training. If Serbia was left in peace for another two years, at the end of that time she would have a first-rate Army of 200,000 men. In saying this, I presume that His Majesty intended me to understand that Serbia would then be in a position to refuse to sacrifice her interests at the dictation of other Powers.

I have, &c.

RONALD HAMILTON.

MINUTES

M. Milovanovitch appears to have forgotten the fact that, even if the Committee should fall, there is no reason why the Army should be weakened, and the Turkish Army would be able to hold its own against the Balkan States.

These conversations are in any case out of place as we and other Powers are pledged to maintain the integrity of Turkey.

C. H.

The Legation at Belgrade should be instructed if the Servians talk in this loose way to say that we cannot discuss views inconsistent with the maintenance of the integrity of Turkey ⁽⁴⁾

E. G.

(4) [*v. infra*, p. 79, No. 69.]

No. 59.

Mr. Findlay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/606.

36598/28101/09/39.

(No. 90.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sofia, D. September 27, 1909.

R. October 4, 1909.

I have the honour to reply to your despatch No. 47, enclosing copy of a despatch addressed by you to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Belgrade,⁽¹⁾ and of a Circular Note communicated to the Powers by the Servian Government on the subject of the failure of Servian efforts to come to an understanding with Bulgaria.⁽²⁾

(1) [Sir Edward Grey's despatch No. 47 to Mr. Findlay embodied his No. 44 to Mr. Hamilton. *v. supra*, pp. 59-60, No. 54, and note (1).]

(2) [*v. supra*, p. 57, No. 52.]

As regards Monsieur Grouitch's suggestion that I should be instructed to drop a hint from time to time that an Entente between the Balkan Powers would be viewed with satisfaction by Great-Britain, I may observe that in accordance with the verbal instructions received in the course of a conversation at the Foreign Office, which I had the honour of having with you before proceeding to Sofia, I took the first opportunity of informing the Bulgarian Minister for Foreign Affairs that His Majesty's Government would be glad to see a rapprochement between Bulgaria and Turkey, and the establishment of cordial relations with the other Balkan States.

His Excellency replied to the effect that the Bulgarian Government were anxious to establish cordial relations with Turkey, and to be on friendly terms with their neighbours, but he intimated that he did not regard a Confederation of Balkan States as at present within the range of practical politics. I have since on several occasions returned to the subject in general conversation, notably in the conversation with King Ferdinand which took place after the presentation of my credentials. (My despatch No. 87, Confidential, of the 28rd September).⁽³⁾

I have also had the honour to report that the relations between Serbia and Bulgaria have, during the last few months, been correct, though not cordial. I will now venture to state what I regard as the three principal obstacles to any cordial or lasting understanding between Serbia and Bulgaria. These obstacles may disappear owing to altered circumstances, but for the present they appear to be separately and collectively prohibitive.

1. Serbia is regarded by practically all Bulgarians as an utterly worthless ally, incapable of governing or defending herself, with aspirations which would be apt to get her friends into trouble, and with nothing to offer as an adequate compensation for the risk which would be entailed by an alliance with her. The Servian Dynasty, Government and Army are the subject of undisguised, universal, and not altogether undeserved contempt. In conversation King Ferdinand has alluded to King Peter as "*ce Roi pantin*," a description more apt than flattering. You are aware that in 1906 a Customs Union with Serbia, which had been accepted by the Bulgarian *Sobranje* with considerable enthusiasm, was rejected by the Servian *Sкупtchina*, probably at the instigation of Austria. The vacillation and lack of political courage displayed by Serbia on this occasion has not been forgotten by Bulgaria.

Nor is the Servian attack on Bulgaria in 1885 forgotten. The stab in the back which Serbia then attempted to deliver, her feeble resistance when faced, and ignominious flight to the sheltering skirts of Austria, were not calculated to inspire her intended victims and ultimate victors with either respect or sympathy.

Finally the racial characteristics of these two Balkan peoples must be kept in view. The Bulgarians have many of the sterling qualities of the Lowland Scotch, including hard, practical, but somewhat egotistical common-sense. The Servians have the poetical, but somewhat unpractical imagination of the Irish. The two races are in fact almost as different and as unlikely to understand one another as the Ulstermen and the Milesian of the South West.

2. King Ferdinand is reported to have said in conversation with a Foreign Representative "*La crainte des armées d'Autriche est pour moi le commencement de la sagesse*." I believe that the maxim thus pithily expressed is the Key-Note to His Majesty's policy as regards the Servian States. It can hardly be doubted that Austria would regard any strong alliance or confederation between the Slav States bordering on her Southern frontiers with great, and not altogether unnatural, distrust and dislike. She would consider that her flank was being turned by a force which might eventually co-operate in an attack on her by the Great Slav Power of the North.

King Ferdinand is quite aware of this, and is not at all disposed to incur the dangerous displeasure of Austria in order to pull chestnuts out of the fire for Serbia.

3. Last, but not least, there is the serious obstacle alluded to by Mr. Mallet in

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 61-2, No. 57.]

conversation with Monsieur Grouitch and admitted by the latter to be more or less valid—viz:—Servian aspirations in Macedonia.

If the present Régime in Turkey is successful in introducing good Government into Macedonia, and in making the Turkish Army so strong as to be in no danger of an attack from Bulgaria, Bulgarian and Servian aspirations to Turkish Territory may gradually die a natural death, and the differences between the two peoples on this subject may disappear with the ambitions to which they are due. Until then Servian aspirations in Macedonia will be an insuperable bar to any entente with Bulgaria.

I do not think I need go into the Servian complaints enumerated against Bulgaria in detail. There have been faults on both sides, but while passing lightly over their own, e.g., the violation of a school teacher by a Servian official, the Servians seem to attribute the attitude of Bulgaria to engagements alleged to exist between that country and Austria.

I have reported at length in previous despatches on the subject of the alleged Entente between Austria and Bulgaria. There is no evidence that anything of this kind exists. I have also reported on the subject of the article in the *Bosnische Post* (my despatch No. 56. Confidential of the 6th July)(¹) and ventured to express the opinion that it did not show any trace of inspiration from any responsible official quarter.

The Servian Circular strikes me as a querulous and somewhat childish document, which, in characteristic Servian Fashion, ignores all disagreeable facts, and overlooks the obvious reasons which regulate the course of Bulgarian Policy; these I have endeavoured to indicate.

I shall lose no opportunity to express, according to your wishes, the opinion that the Bulgarian Government would do well to cultivate friendly relations with Serbia in commercial and general intercourse, but I venture to respectfully submit that to recommend the formation of a durable entente on political lines with Serbia would be entirely useless under the existing circumstances. I am further distinctly under the impression that the advocacy of a Balkan Confederation on the part of His Majesty's Government would be regarded as an unfriendly act by Austria-Hungary, for the reasons mentioned above. I do not doubt that His Majesty's Ambassador at Vienna would confirm the correctness of this impression.

On the other hand, Bulgaria has no wish to see Serbia absorbed by Austria or to have the powerful Dual-Monarchy as a neighbour. It is by no means impossible that an immediate prospect of Austrian aggression to the South might bring about a consolidation of the Slav races whose interests would thereby be threatened. But of this I venture to submit that there is at present no sign. It would also appear that Austrian aggressiveness, which is now quiescent, might be aroused by the formation of a Slav confederation, which though intended to be merely defensive, she would regard as a serious menace.

When Serbia has developed her resources, reformed her Government, reorganized her Army, and reduced her aspirations to what she can reasonably hope to obtain, by her own strength, Bulgaria and other States may be willing to welcome her advances. At present she seems more inclined to rely on "sensational articles" in the *Samouprava*, and circular appeals to the Powers.

I am sending copies of this despatch to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Belgrade and to His Majesty's Ambassador at Vienna.

I have, &c.

M. DE C. FINDLAY.

MINUTES.

The only thing that seems likely to bring Bulgaria and Serbia together is a common danger—such as Austrian aggression. We need not answer the Servian circular.

R. P. M.
L. M.
C. H.

(¹) [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above.]

This despatch is a very sound analysis of the situation Mr Findlay should be told that the views put forward by him are approved that while he should neglect no opportunity of furthering good relations between Bulgaria and Balkan States he is not desired to press this policy to a point which would create opposition in Bulgaria or elsewhere.⁽⁵⁾

E. G.

(⁵) [A despatch (No. 57) which embodied the above minute was sent to Mr. Findlay on October 23. (F.O. 371/606. 36593/28101/00/39.)]

No. 60.

Mr. Findlay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/606.

36592/24606/09/7.

(No. 89.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sofia, D. September 28, 1909.

R. October 4, 1909.

I have the honour to enclose herewith copies of two despatches as marked in the margin, which have been addressed to me by Colonel Napier, Military Attaché to this Legation, reporting the substance of a most interesting conversation with General Dimitrieff, Chief Intendant of the Bulgarian Army, on the following subjects:—

1. The possibility of raising a Bulgarian loan in England; the guarantees which might be offered, and the advisability of spending part of the proceeds on Railway Material.

2. The advantage which Bulgaria would gain by purchasing ammunition and war material in England if His Majesty's Government could induce the Turkish Government to permit importation by sea via the Straits.

I may say that General Dimitrieff's view as to the incapacity of M. Salabascheff is very generally held.

I had the honour to communicate part of this information to you by Telegram.⁽¹⁾

General Dimitrieff is not a member of the Government, for which he has no claim to speak. His opinion however is generally regarded as sound, and is certain to carry weight.

I have, &c.

M. DE C. FINDLAY.

Enclosure 1 in No. 60.

Lieutenant-Colonel Napier to Mr. Findlay.

(No. 26.)

Sir,

Sofia, September 28, 1909.

I have the honor to report that during the course of conversation to-day with General Dimitrieff, Chief Intendant of the army, I received some information which may prove of interest regarding the possibilities of a loan.

General Dimitrieff said that in his opinion a railway guarantee ought to be offered. The loan is chiefly required for railways and would be largely used to make a new railway from Sofia due East along the foot of the Balkans, passing down the Tundja direct to Burgas. This will be of great value, not only as constituting the shortest line from Burgas to Sofia, but also by opening up fresh country rich in mineral, agricultural, and industrial capabilities. Besides this, the line Rustchuk to Varna, (which served as a guarantee to a former loan, since converted)—the main line to Constantinople from Ichtiman, four stations South East of Sofia, to the Turko-

(¹) [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above.]

Bulgarian frontier, and also the other lines in Southern Bulgaria are equally free to serve as guarantees. Another projected line is from Silistria, on the Danube, due south to Novibazar. This also will open up a very fertile country. There would, moreover, in General Dimitrieff's opinion, be no objection, if a loan were concluded in England, of including as a condition of the loan the purchase of railway material, as this would in any case be purchased either in Belgium or England, whereas were a loan to be concluded with France, all they have to offer is war material of which Bulgaria does not at present stand in need.

Thus it appears that as regards both guarantee and purchase of material as a condition of a loan, General Dimitrieff's views are diametrically opposed to those of M. Salabascheff of whose capacity as a finance minister he has no great opinion. General Dimitrieff considers that with a guarantee it should be quite possible to obtain a loan at $4\frac{1}{2}\%$ issued at 85.

I have, &c.

[H. D. NAPIER, *L[ieutenant]-Colonel,*
Military Attaché.]

Enclosure 2 in No. 60.

Lieutenant-Colonel Napier to Mr. Findlay.

(No. 27.)

Sir,

Sofia, September 28, 1909.

In continuation of to-day's conversation reported in my preceding despatch, I have the honour to add that General Dimitrieff also referred to the question of the importation of war material. At present Turkey permits no importation of war material by Bulgaria via the Dardanelles. General Dimitrieff tells me that the cost of such stores per ton coming from France or Germany over land amounts altogether to about 400 francs, whereas if the Turks would permit the importation via Burgas or Varna, goods could be delivered from England at either of these ports for 14 shillings a ton including a return freight. He reckons that this would cheapen the cost of all war stores by at least 10% and would enable English firms to compete successfully in the supply of cartridges with continental firms. In his opinion our Ambassador at Constantinople would be able, if he so wished, to influence the Turks towards granting Bulgaria this concession. When I suggested that possibly the Turks might require some "quid pro quo," or at least the improvement of political relations before acceding to such a request, he declared that commercial amenities should pave the way to political ones and not vice versa; that good relations between Turkey and Bulgaria did not depend upon the smaller Power, Bulgaria, but upon the greater Power, Turkey; that Bulgaria was quite willing to have better relations but the Turks would not understand. As regards a "quid pro quo," the permission to import war material was too trifling a matter to require any return beyond the good-will of Bulgaria, and it was in Turkey's interests that Bulgaria should be strong. Besides, in any case, Turkey could not prevent Bulgaria from obtaining war material from one source or another; it would therefore be good policy on her part to oblige the Bulgarian Government in this matter. If by chance the two countries were subsequently to quarrel, Turkey would have it in her power to stop the importation, and so cause Bulgaria much inconvenience before the latter could readjust her arrangements with other markets.

I have, &c.

H. D. NAPIER, *L[ieutenant]-Colonel,*
Military Attaché.

MINUTES.

I have written a short memorandum (annexed)⁽²⁾ on the question raised in this despatch, as to H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] inducing the Turkish Gov[ernment] to permit the importation

(²) [*v. infra*, pp. 75-6, No. 65.]

by sea *via the Straits* of ammunition and war material destined for Bulgaria. Perhaps it might be printed and a copy sent to Mr. Findlay for his information.

Copy of despatch sent to D[irector of] M[ilitary] O[perations].

A. P.

October 4th, 1909.

R. P. M.

I am informed that the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t approached Mr. Koch, a banker residing in London, with a view to floating a loan of £10,000,000. The bank would only agree to float 3 or 4 millions provided sufficient security were found. I have not heard the result of further developments.

It is not likely that the Porte would agree to arms and ammunition for Bulgaria passing through the Straits. The Turks are much too suspicious of Bulgaria's future intentions, and not without cause.

C. H.

We should encourage the Bulgarians to do business here, so far as we have opportunity, but we can't approach the Turks with this request.

E. G.

No. 61.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/601.

36687/36687/09/3.

(No. 156.) Confidential.

Vienna, D. September 29, 1909.

Sir,

R. October 4, 1909.

I have the honour to report that as I am about to go on leave in a few days' time, I took the opportunity yesterday, when seeing Count Aehrenthal, to obtain from him his views with regard to the present state of international questions.

His Excellency said to me that he was satisfied with the general outlook of things just now because the dark point which for so long had overshadowed the political horizon—Constantinople—looked now brighter. He did not mean to say that all anxiety with regard to the stability of the new "régime" in Turkey had passed away, but his information led him to believe that he was justified in having a little more confidence in its duration. This being the case he intended to do nothing which could in any way damage the prestige of or do harm to the new "régime." He desired peace in the Balkans, and he authorized me to assure you that his policy in the Near East would be to exert himself to maintain the present "status quo" there as far as he possibly could.

Count Aehrenthal observed that he was very pleased to see that the acute state of the Cretan crisis had passed away, and he hoped that the four Powers would find a final solution to this troublesome question. Austria-Hungary and Germany would keep strictly aloof from interfering in the settlement of the Cretan question, and they would approve of any arrangement which these Powers might arrive at with regard to the island. His only interest in the Cretan question was its possible reflex action upon events in the Balkans, but he hoped that Turkey would act reasonably with regard to Crete, and he thought there was some probability of her doing so as the Young Turks were quite aware that if they allowed the Cretan question to disturb the present equilibrium in the Balkans, they might complicate matters for themselves and compel Austria-Hungary and Germany to abandon their present attitude of reserve with regard to problems in the Near East.

His Excellency mentioned to me the question of the Turkish Loan of seven million pounds which Sir Ernest Cassel has gone to Constantinople to negotiate. He informed me that a leading Vienna banker had recently come to him to enquire whether it was advisable in the opinion of the Austro-Hungarian Government that the public here should be invited to take up a share of this Loan. He had replied to the financier that as far as he could see the peace of the Balkans was not likely to be disturbed

in the immediate future, and that therefore he saw no objection to the Austrian public being invited to take part in the Loan. He knew that the Turkish Government were badly in want of money, and that money was necessary to consolidate the new "régime" at Constantinople, and as to see this was his sincerest desire at present, he would view with satisfaction any steps which would contribute to the success of the Loan in question. He was pleased to learn from me that Sir Ernest Cassel had told me, when passing through Vienna the other day, that he was quite willing to give a portion of the Loan to a group of Vienna bankers if they could see their way to secure the investment of *bonâ fide* Austrian capital in this Loan.

Count Aehrenthal then turned to the recent visit to Vienna of Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, the new German Chancellor. He told me that he had had several long conversations with that gentleman, and that they had reviewed the international situation of Europe in all its bearings. As to the Alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary, there was nothing new to be said: it was as solid as ever, in fact, there was no cloud, however small, between the two Empires. The relations between the two allies to Italy had been gone into, and the two Ministers had come to the conclusion that there seemed no reasonable prospect that Italy would separate herself for a long time to come from the Triple Alliance. His Excellency said to me that the maintenance of Italy in the Triple Alliance was a guarantee of peace, for it was no use pretending that the prospects of peace in Europe would be increased—he evidently had in his mind the relations between Italy and Austria-Hungary—if Italy became unattached to any one of the Great Powers, or attached herself to a group of Powers which might be suspected of hostility to Germany and Austria-Hungary. As regards the Near East, Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg and Count Aehrenthal appeared to have been in complete accord that efficient moral support should be given to the new "régime" at Constantinople, and they agreed that they should continue to pursue a policy of general pacification so far as the little Balkan States were concerned. The two Empires would not pursue an anti-Russian policy in the Near East, and Count Aehrenthal declared to me that Russian influence was paramount in Bulgaria and that he saw this with equanimity.

According to His Excellency's account, Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg had expressed to him his satisfaction at Austria-Hungary's improved relations with Great Britain, and he had added that Germany's relations with ourselves had likewise greatly improved, and that he would do all in his power to maintain that improvement. Count Aehrenthal made no allusion to the question of naval disarmament, but told me that Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg was determined to do all he could to pursue an international policy which would bring about a general "détente" all round in Europe. Apparently in the eyes of the German Chancellor the only weak point in the international situation just now was the relations between Austria-Hungary and Russia, which continue to be, if not hostile, at least cool. Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg regretted that he could see but little diminution in the feeling of ill-will which still prevails at St. Petersburg against the Dual Monarchy. In answer to a question I put to him, Count Aehrenthal replied that on the whole he had been favourably impressed by Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg; he had found him a man of moderation and common sense, and he felt convinced that he would pursue in his policy the path which led to conciliation rather than the path which led to friction. He added that Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg was inclined to balance the two sides of a question with minute care, and that he seemed to be able to appreciate an opponent's views and arguments, but His Excellency appeared to be still in doubt as to whether the new German Chancellor would prove to be a man of decision; he was certain, however, that he would prove to be a man of peace.

I enquired of Count Aehrenthal what prospects there were at present of a meeting of the Delegations. He replied that it was very difficult to forecast when they would meet, but he thought that unless the Hungarian crisis should be protracted beyond expectations they would do so about the middle of November. He expressed to me his satisfaction that an agreement had been arrived at with you as to what he was

authorized to say with regard to the statement made by you in the House of Commons on the subject of the correspondence which passed between Count Karolyi and Mr. Gladstone in 1880.⁽¹⁾ He expected to be questioned over this matter in the Delegations and it was therefore absolutely necessary for him to be in a position to give a reply which would meet with the approval both of yourself and of the Austro-Hungarian Government. I observed to Count Aehrenthal that I presumed that he would have to tell the Delegations a good deal of his views with regard to the Bosnian annexation crisis, and that I was somewhat afraid that if he did so it might cause further trouble between Russia and Austria-Hungary. His Excellency replied that he had no desire to do anything which would envenom the relations between the two countries, and that, although it was absolutely necessary for him to explain to the Delegations the Austro-Hungarian position with regard to the annexation question, he had the intention of doing so as briefly as possible and in a way which he hoped would not give rise to international press polemics. He made an allusion to the article recently published in the "Fortnightly Review," giving the Russian case against himself in the Bosnian question, and which he attributed to Monsieur Isvolsky's inspiration.⁽²⁾ He told me that he had in his possession documentary proofs which could rebut a great deal of what had been said in that article, but he thought it better for himself not to rush into print as had done Monsieur Isvolsky.

I think that I may say that I found Count Aehrenthal in a happier frame of mind with regard to foreign affairs than I have as yet found him, though he seemed worried and anxious as to the internal state of things in the country and as to the Hungarian crisis, for which it appears difficult to find a solution.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 30-1, No. 26, and note ⁽²⁾.]

⁽²⁾ [An article entitled "Baron Aehrenthal and M. Izvolsky's Diplomatic Enigmas" appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* for September 1909.]

No. 62.

Mr. Gregory to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/724.

38882/38882/09/37.

(No. 46.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sinara, D. September 30, 1909.

R. October 18, 1909.

I have the honour to report that the Bulgarian Military Attaché spoke to me to-day of the new direction which he maintains Roumanian foreign policy to be now taking. The last month, he asserts, has seen a decided movement away from the Triple Alliance and towards Russia, and he ascribes this in large measure to a reconsideration by the Roumanian Government, at the instance of the Chief of the General Staff, of the military operations that would take place between the neighbouring Powers in the event of a general war. The Chief of the General Staff has in fact gone so far as to publish his views anonymously in the leading military paper of Roumania in an article that is largely an answer to a recent Vienna publication entitled "Ruemaniens Wehrmacht," which is based on the assumption that the Roumanian forces will go solid with those of Germany and Austria-Hungary. The Roumanian reply repudiates this assumption, and points out that in the event of war Roumania will by no means have everything to gain by throwing in her lot with the Austro-German armies. Should war break out, Russia, it appears, intends to make a merely demonstrative resistance to Germany; that is to say, she will rest on her new line of fortresses which are being or will be constructed more inland along the Polish frontier, while she will throw her main forces south west through Galicia against the Austrians. Having thus kept at bay the German army and engaged practically the whole of that of Austria-

Hungary, she will, in the event of Roumania adhering to the Triple Alliance, send her Black Sea Fleet to Constanza and march a large expedition through the Dobrudscha, creating complete havoc over a practically defenceless country. Should Roumania at the same time be engaged with Bulgaria, she will therefore be wholly at the mercy of Russia.

It seems strange that these considerations, which seem to carry with them a large amount of logic, should not have presented themselves before with greater force to the Roumanian military authorities, and it is not clear to what cause their sudden appearance at this moment should be ascribed. It seems quite certain, however, that both the Roumanian Government and the King have recently somewhat relaxed their allegiance to Austria-Hungary and turned their thoughts towards Russia. Great significance has been attached in the Press and in diplomatic circles to Monsieur Bratiano's statement to the representative of the 'Neue Freie Presse' respecting the increasingly friendly relations between Roumania and Russia, as I had the honour to report in my despatch No. 42 of August 28th.⁽¹⁾ Exceptional attention has been paid by the King to the Russian Minister and the staff of the Russian Legation; and towards the middle of next month a body of thirty Russian officers, including nine Generals, under the leadership of General Kaulbars, are coming to Roumania with the ostensible object of visiting the battlefields of 1878, and will be received by the King and fêted by the country. Mr. Spencer Eddy, the retiring American Minister, told me that at his farewell audience a few days ago the King spoke to him exclusively of his interest in and sympathy for Russia and his desire to maintain the most intimate possible relations with that country.

The practical considerations of the military order are no doubt those that will carry most weight in effecting this change of policy, if it is a fact. But it is equally not impossible that the almost dangerous friction which now exists between Roumania and the Magyar Chauvinists has begun to tell on the foreign policy at last. The recent decrees of Count Apponyi forbidding religious instruction in Roumanian in the Transylvanian [*sic*] schools have transformed into sheer exasperation the bitterness of feeling which has been created and fed by the hundreds of petty incidents of persecution that have occurred this year. The King, who was to have visited the Emperor of Austria at Vienna from September 2nd to 7th gave suddenly a curt refusal to carry out the visit when the actual dates were presented to him, and this has been ascribed, not to motives of health, for His Majesty is better than he has been for a long time, but to the failure of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand to carry out certain promises that he is said to have made during his visit to Sinaia with the object of effecting the amelioration of the lot of the Roumanians in Hungary.

Major Stancioff, who has recently been at Sofia, told me that the feeling among the statesmen with whom he came into contact there was exceedingly pessimistic: that they considered war inevitable within the next two or three years; that Bulgaria could not therefore be sufficiently thankful that her armies did not take the field a year ago, as her strength remains consequently unimpaired for the coming crisis; and that, though she has no intention whatever of undertaking a policy of adventure for the present, any symptoms of an impending catastrophe in Turkey will probably lead her to face the question of an immediate and forcible protection of the Bulgarian population in Macedonia.

I have, &c.

J. D. GREGORY.

MINUTES.

An interesting despatch.

The reported relaxation of Roumania's allegiance to Austria does not tally with what King Ferdinand told M. Paléologue.⁽²⁾

R. P. M.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 371/724. 38443/38448/09/37.)]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 29-30, No. 25.]

King Ferdinand had some ulterior motive in his conversation with M. Paléologue. We have never believed that there is a military alliance between Austria and Roumania as it is all to the advantage of the latter Power to keep her hands free.

L. M.
E. G.

No. 63.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 371/601.
38810/30980/09/3.
(No. 108.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 4, 1909.

I have read with much interest Y[our] E[xcellency]'s despatch No. 142 of the 5th ultimo,⁽¹⁾ in which you report a conversation with C[oun]t von Aehrenthal on the subject of the relations between this country and Austria-Hungary, more especially in regard to the Near East.

With regard to the fourth paragraph of your despatch, respecting the attitude of the two countries towards the new régime in Turkey, I have to request you to take a convenient opportunity to inform C[oun]t von Aehrenthal that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] are glad to hear that the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t share their views in regard to the reformed administration, and that they agree in deprecating any intervention in the affairs of the three Vilayets,—a policy which H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] have consistently advocated since the events of July 1908, and in accordance with which they were the first to abandon the reform scheme (see my circular telegram of July 29th 1908),⁽²⁾ and to suggest the withdrawal of the Gendarmerie officers from Macedonia (see my telegram No. 73 of September 10th 1908, to your predecessor).⁽³⁾

I am, &c.

[E. GREY.]

⁽¹⁾ [v. Gooch & Temperley, Vol. V, pp. 804-5, No. 868.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It was to the effect that representation to the Porte on the subject of the Macedonian hands was inopportune in the opinion of the British Government. (F.O. 371/585. 26895/Case 6/10/44E.) Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen, telegram No. 45 of July 29, 1908.]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced, as its tenour is sufficiently indicated.]

No. 64.

Sir C. Hardinge to Sir F. Cartwright.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Cartwright:—

Foreign Office, October 4, 1909.

The account which you sent me of your interview with Isvolsky⁽²⁾ was very interesting—especially as an indication of his actual frame of mind now that all the questions of last winter have been more or less satisfactorily concluded.

I still think that Isvolsky was greatly responsible for all the agitation and risks of last winter, owing to his ineptitude and extreme vanity. There is no doubt that the Sandjak Railway was the cause of the first breach between him and Aehrenthal, and I have never yet succeeded in fathoming how far Isvolsky was involved or how much he knew beforehand of that undertaking. In any case, he ought to have been much more careful afterwards, if he had been already tricked by Aehrenthal in connexion with the Railway.

⁽¹⁾ [Hardinge MSS., Vol. III of 1909.]

⁽²⁾ [v. Gooch & Temperley, Vol. V, pp. 807-9, No. 870.]

It is very difficult to know what passed at Buchlau,⁽³⁾ and I do not think we shall ever know the full extent of the negotiations until somebody commits an indiscretion and publishes the Buchlau Protocol. All we heard at the time was that the agreement was complete, and we gathered, from our after-knowledge, that no objection would be made by Russia to the annexation, provided that Austria agreed to the abolition of the Dardanelles clause. In that Isvolsky misinterpreted the feelings of his own country, which cared a great deal about Bosnia, and very little about the Dardanelles. Had he lived more in Russia, he would have realized the apathy of the public on the subject of naval movements and possibilities of exit from the Black Sea. All that he has a right to complain of, as far as I can judge, is that Aehrenthal perpetrated a "fait accompli" when he least expected it. We know now Aehrenthal's reasons for having precipitated this proceeding. Even then, had Isvolsky come to Paris and London and explained to us clearly what his agreement had been with Austria and the nature of the previous engagements which the Russian Government had made with the Austrian Government, and had he told us at the same time that the Russian army and navy were powerless, we might have found means of avoiding the dangerous political situation for which he was entirely responsible.

As for the so-called German ultimatum delivered at St. Petersburg during the height of the Servian crisis, the account which Isvolsky gave to you is, I believe, the true one; but it differs very materially, as you know, from the description which he gave to the Council of Ministers at St. Petersburg and also to the English and French Ambassadors there. He did this, I believe, simply to extricate himself from what would have been regarded as an act of concession, and his having done so does not say much for his honesty. I always understood that what Pourtales said was that, in the event of Russia not proceeding at once to recognize the annexation, Austria would have a free hand in Servia, and that Isvolsky agreed to the recognition in order to avert an immediate invasion of Servian territory.

I entirely share your views as to the absolute necessity of an understanding of some kind between Austria and Russia as to policy in the Balkans, otherwise it is unlikely that unbroken peace will obtain in those regions for many years. At the same time, whatever policy is agreed upon between the two Powers would have to be a policy of self-abnegation. Any other policy would inevitably end in a European war. Isvolsky may be right in what he said as to the position of the Russian army last winter, but, from all I hear from other sources, that army can hardly be ready for war for at least another two years. If peace can be maintained until then, the equilibrium in Europe will be greatly strengthened.

It is very unfortunate that there should be such bitter feelings of animosity between Isvolsky and Aehrenthal and, until one of them retires from political life, I do not see how the situation is to be improved. I have known them both extremely well for a great number of years, and I would trust neither; but I would sooner trust Aehrenthal than Isvolsky, and I prefer Aehrenthal because he is much the more clever⁽⁴⁾ of the two.

I will send a copy of your letter⁽⁵⁾ by next bag to Nicolson.

[CHARLES HARDINGE.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, pp. 367-8, No. 270, and *v. Subject Index*, sub BUCHLAU INTERVIEW.]

⁽⁴⁾ [Four words of a personal character are here omitted.]

⁽⁵⁾ [*v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, pp. 807-9, No. 870.]

Memorandum respecting the Passage of Merchant vessels through the Dardanelles and Bosphorus.

(See Mr. Findlay's despatch No. 89, September 28, 1909.)⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/606.

36592/24606/09.

October 4, 1909.

The correspondence on this subject is very voluminous, but the salient facts of the situation appear to be approximately as follows:—

H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] have never seriously contested the fact that the navigation of the Black Sea by any other Powers than Russia and Turkey, and the Riverain States of the Danube, depends entirely upon the will of the Sultan as to allowing merchant vessels to pass through the Bosphorus.

In 1823, when a merchant vessel passed through the Straits without waiting for a firman, the Sultan thought seriously of enforcing his rights by totally suspending all commercial relations with foreign States.—and these obnoxious measures would not improbably have been attempted had it not been for the energetic action of H[is] M[ajesty's] Ambassador, Lord Strangford,⁽²⁾ who threatened measures of retaliation in the Ionian Seas, where Turkish vessels were only admitted on sufferance.

In 1829 the Duke of Wellington wrote a memorandum, quoted by Lord Kimberley in his despatch No. 261 of December 9th 1892 to Sir C. Ford:—

“It must further be admitted that the Porte retains the right possessed by every independent Power of regulating her own internal concerns, and among the most important of these is that necessary provision for her own safety against surprise or treachery, which would be jeopardised by the abandonment of all right of control over ships navigating her waters. This was the view held by the Duke of Wellington who, in a memorandum on the subject in 1829 wrote that the maritime independence of the Porte and particularly the independent exercise of sovereign authority in her own waters was important to all maritime Powers.”

In 1881 Lord Dufferin⁽³⁾ reported that a German merchant-vessel had been stopped at the Dardanelles by the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t, on the ground that she was suspected of carrying ammunition: the German Embassy held the Porte responsible for demurrage: but Sir J. Pauncefoot minuted Lord Dufferin's despatch:—

“In my view the Porte has a perfect right to search vessels suspected of carrying dynamite. Such power could not be denied to any other State in its own waters, and it is not taken away from Turkey by the Capitulations or any Treaty.”

In April 1888 the Porte addressed a circular to the Powers requesting that the authorisation of the Ottoman Gov[ernmen]t should be applied for every time a ship carrying arms or ammunition destined for a Foreign Power had occasion to pass the Straits.

In 1893 some correspondence took place with Nobel's Explosives Company relative to an order received by them from Bulgaria for the supply of dynamite and gun-cotton. Sir N. O'Connor, reporting on the subject in his despatch No. 600 of September 24 1903, expressed the opinion, in view of recent cases, that if the Nobel Company attempted to send the explosives viâ the Bosphorus, the cargo would undoubtedly be stopped.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 67–9, No. 60.]

⁽²⁾ [Marginal note. “Lord Strangford, No. 161, November 26th, 1823.”]

⁽³⁾ [Marginal note: “Lord Dufferin, No. 104, Commercial, November 8th, 1881.”]

It seems therefore extremely unlikely that the Porte would allow ammunition for Bulgaria to pass at present.

On the other hand, by the arrangements made between Russia and Turkey in September 1891, the steamers of the Russian Volunteer Fleet are allowed to pass through carrying explosives.

A. P[ARKER].

No. 66.

Sir B. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/606.

38415/28101/09/39.

(No. 91.) Confidential.

Belgrade, D. October 12, 1909.

Sir,

R. October 18, 1909.

With reference to Mr. Hamilton's Despatch No. 86 of the 27th Ultimo,⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to report that Monsieur Milovanovitch, the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs, proposes to leave Belgrade on Thursday next the 14th Instant on a journey to Vienna, Berlin, London and Paris, and that he expects to reach London about the end of next week (the 22nd or 23d Instant).

His Excellency told me that he would stay a couple of days in Vienna in order to confer with the Austrian Minister of Commerce on the subject of a possible renewal of the Commercial Treaty negotiations, but that the real object of his journey to the other Capitals was of a political nature, viz.: to discuss the general situation in the Balkans, and particularly to try to move the British and French Governments to use their influence at Sofia to bring about a better understanding between Servia and Bulgaria. He added that the Servian Government were willing and anxious to effect a rapprochement, but that they were still met by a suspicious attitude on the part of the Bulgarians.

If you should find it possible to see Monsieur Milovanovitch during his visit to London, he will no doubt explain his wishes and hopes at length, and I should prefer not to forestall his explanation. I had an interesting conversation this morning, however, with Monsieur Spalaikovitch, the Secretary General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, who stated the Servian point of view approximately as follows: He thought the proper course for Servia and Bulgaria to pursue at present was to assume that the movement for effective constitutional Government in Turkey would be successful, and to do all in their power to assist the Young Turkish party to introduce administrative reforms which would benefit the Christian population in European Turkey, in the same way that they had previously avowed their intention of seconding the efforts of the Powers to effect reforms in Macedonia by means of European officials. There was reason to fear, however, that the regeneration of Turkey by Constitutional Government might not succeed, and it seemed most desirable that Servia and Bulgaria should be prepared for that eventuality also, and should by a previous agreement as to the course they would then pursue remove all possibility of discussions which might place the ultimate destiny of the Balkan peninsula into [*sic*] other hands.

I have read with much interest Mr. Findlay's despatch No. 90 Confidential, of the 27th Ultimo,⁽²⁾ and entirely agree with his statement of some of the obstacles to a cordial understanding between Servia and Bulgaria; but I venture to observe that the case of Mademoiselle Illieva, to which he refers, was much exaggerated by the Bulgarian press, and was in itself a trivial incident, by no means amounting to "violation." Moreover the culprit was promptly and severely punished.

The real difficulty seems to be indicated in the second of the obstacles enumerated by Mr. Findlay. Since the annexation of Bosnia and the Herzegovina, far more than

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 62-4, No. 58.]

(²) [*v. supra*, pp. 64-6, No. 59.]

half the Servian race are included within the limits of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and the danger of the Kingdom of Servia coming into conflict with that Monarchy in consequence of seditious movements in the Serbo-Croatian provinces is ever present. A country in this position cannot be a satisfactory ally to Bulgaria, whose aspirations lie in quite another direction; and even the fear of becoming the immediate neighbour of an Empire credited with aggressive tendencies in the Balkans, could hardly countervail the danger of being brought into conflict with that Empire in a quarrel which in no way concerns Bulgarian interests.

I am sending a Copy of this Despatch to His Majesty's Minister at Sofia.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

MINUTE.

I shall be away from 21st to 26th but someone can see M. Milovanovitch in my absence. We have expressed our views to Bulgaria in a sense favourable to Servia and cannot do more.
E. G.

No. 67.

Mr. T. Russell to Sir C Hardinge.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Charles,

Vienna, October 15, 1909.

Your letter of the 4th⁽²⁾ to my Chief unluckily only arrived here after his departure for Paris, but I am sending it to England by to-day's messenger in the hope that it may reach him at Aynho before he pays his first visit to the Foreign Office. In compliance with his instructions I opened all his private correspondence and have therefore had the advantage of reading your most interesting comments on his account of his conversation with Isvolsky in Venice. In connection with the last paragraph of your letter, in which you sum up the personal aspect of the question, it may interest you to hear that Boulatzell, who was in Vienna the other day on his way to take up his new post as Russian Minister to the Vatican, told me that both Bülow before his retirement and Schoen at a more recent date had assured him that they would like to see Isvolsky as Ambassador in Berlin and had volunteered the statement that his supposed Anglophil tendencies would, in their opinion, be no bar to such an appointment.

You must be weary of the ever-increasing contributions towards the past history of the Balkan Crisis, and I hesitate therefore to add to your store by repeating another saying of Milovanovitch during his last visit to Vienna. But as he is still on the European Stage and as any detail which sheds a light on his character and possible actions in the future may be of use in filling some gap in the information already at your disposal, I will not withhold this further scrap.

According to my French Colleague, Milovanovitch, in reviewing the net result of the whole disturbance, spoke much as follows:—

"In my own country and abroad it is universally considered that my policy suffered a crushing defeat. I deny this entirely and claim moreover to have achieved two signal diplomatic triumphs. On the one hand I unmasked the true designs of Austria in the Near East, and on the other hand I associated England and Russia in the humiliation of Servia. The grievances of a small Balkan State when she struggles single-handed are apt to be forgotten, but when, as in the recent crisis, her cause has been espoused by two Great Powers, the incidents connected with her discomfiture are not likely to be allowed to sink into oblivion."

⁽¹⁾ [Hardinge MSS., Vol. II of 1909.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 73-4, No. 64.]

Slatin Pasha, who was here the other day on his way back to the Soudan, told me that both the Emperor and Aehrenthal, with whom he had audiences, had given spontaneous expression to their high appreciation of our Ambassador.

Yours very truly,
THEO RUSSELL.

No. 68.

Mr. Beaumont to Sir Eduard Grey.

F.O. 371/694.

39628/39628/09/27.

(No. 24.) Confidential.

Sir,

Cettinje, D. October 22, 1909.

R. October 28, 1909.

At my Audience yesterday, on the occasion of presenting my Letters of Credence, Prince Nicholas spoke at some length on the subject of the relations between this country and Austria-Hungary.

His Royal Highness appears to be still under the influence of a strong feeling of resentment against the Government of the Dual Monarchy, while however professing esteem and regard for the person of the Emperor. He said that he could never forgive the annexation of the two provinces which he had helped to win from the Turks nor forget the disregard which had been shown of his claims for compensation. He was also much irritated by the recent reports circulated in the Vienna Press of dissensions in his Family, for which there was not the slightest foundation, adding that it would be difficult to find a more united family than his own. He could only conclude that these reports had been invented in Austria in order to discredit the Principality.

While making allowance for a certain theatrical exaggeration which sometimes characterises His Royal Highness's language, it left little doubt that should Austria-Hungary be involved in difficulties in the Balkans and the Prince still be living, Montenegro would not remain a passive spectator but is ready to risk all to pay off old scores. Referring doubtless to the recent arrival of arms from Russia, His Royal Highness said that the country had never been better prepared for war, that he had a large surplus stock of rifles and cartridges for distribution, if necessary, across the frontier and that in any policy of adventure he would have the support of the whole Serb people, numbering nearly eight millions.

The resentment of Prince Nicholas against Austria-Hungary does not however appear to be felt in the same degree by the Hereditary Prince, who fully realises the advantages of living on good terms with his powerful neighbour and who, as I have already reported, expresses himself as satisfied with the moral concessions obtained by the revision of article XXIX of the Berlin Treaty.

His Royal Highness laid some stress on the opportunity of developing our commercial relations with this country which was offered by the opening of a Free Port at Antivari, which is to take place to-morrow, and the recent boycotting of Austrian goods which has already diverted some trade into new channels.

I hope shortly to visit Antivari and to be in a position to furnish a detailed report on this subject. . . .⁽¹⁾

I have, &c.

HENRY BEAUMONT.

MINUTE.

Still the Prince makes no bones about accepting the Austrian subsidy.

A. P.

Oct[ober] 28/09.

⁽¹⁾ [The remainder of the letter is concerned with His Royal Highness's opinion of Mr Beaumont's predecessors in his post.]

No. 69.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir B. Whithead ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/606.
 36640/28101/09/39.
 (No. 51.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 23, 1909.

I have received Mr. Hamilton's despatch No. 86 Confidential of the 27th ultimo, reporting a conversation with M. Milovanovitch in regard to Servian aspirations.⁽²⁾

In the event of M. Milovanovitch, or any other member of the Servian Gov[ernmen]t, attempting to converse in such a manner in future, it would be well to inform H[is] E[xcellency] that H[is] M[ajesty's] Legation cannot discuss views inconsistent with the maintenance of the integrity of Turkey.

[I am, &c.

E. GREY]

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch was repeated to Bucharest (No. 43)]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 62-4, No. 58]

No. 70.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.

F.O. 371/758.
 39909/26/09/44
 (No. 148.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 27, 1909.

The Italian Ambassador told me to-day that nothing had passed on the occasion of the Czar's visit to Italy except what had been reported in the Press.⁽¹⁾ There had been an agreement that the maintenance of the "status quo" in the Balkans and the consolidation of the Turkish Empire were desirable.

I observed that the visit seemed to have passed off very well, but so far as I could judge from the Press reports there seemed to be a little sensitiveness in some quarters about the visit.

The Ambassador replied that it was remarkable that such sensitiveness as had been expressed had appeared in Germany rather than in Austria, though it was true, of course, that if Count Aehrenthal wished to preserve the "status quo" he could have no reason for objecting to the visit.

I told the Ambassador that I thought Count Aehrenthal had not now any design for disturbing the "status quo."

The Ambassador remarked that this might be true of Count Aehrenthal, and it was no doubt true of the Emperor. But Count Aehrenthal was only one man, and the views of the Emperor's successor were unknown.

I am, &c.

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [The Emperor Nicholas paid a visit to the King of Italy at Racconigi avoiding Austro-Hungarian territory on his way there and back. *cp. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, pp. 809-10, No. 871. For the secret agreement there concluded v. *Un Livre Noir*, Vol. I, pp. 357-8; Giolitti, *Memoirs of my Life* (1923), pp. 202-7; Savinski, *Recollections of a Russian Diplomatist*, (1927), pp. 166-70, and *G.P.* XXVII, I, pp. 397-431, Chapter 214, *passim*. References to the meeting at Racconigi occur *infra*, pp. 81-3, No. 73, pp. 83-4, No. 74, p. 122, No. 109; p. 126, No. 112; pp. 128-9, No. 116; pp. 139-40, No. 131; pp. 144-5, No. 136; p. 159, No. 147.]

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. T. Russell.

F.O. 371/758.
39908/26/09/44A.
(No. 116.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 27, 1909.

Count Mensdorff came to see me to-day, on his return to London, and said that things seemed to be going quietly. Count Aehrenthal was generally satisfied; he was pleased with the impression produced by the King's stay at Marienbad, and with the formula I had sent him about what I had said in the House of Commons about the Karolyi letter.⁽¹⁾

I said I was glad to hear this, and I asked whether anything had been done with regard to Dr. Friedjung's mendacious statements as to the interviews with the Emperor of Austria last year.

Count Mensdorff said that he had spoken to Count Aehrenthal on this subject.

I remarked that Dr. Friedjung⁽²⁾ ought to have been told to deny the statements he had made, because they were untrue, or else an official "démenti" should have been made by the Austrian Government.

Count Mensdorff urged that, as so much time had passed and the matter was now at rest, it would be a pity to revive it by an official "démenti."

I replied that at any rate Dr. Friedjung, who I understood was a person with whom Count Aehrenthal had communications, should be told that his statements were absolutely untrue. As Count Aehrenthal knew, the question of German naval expenditure had not been mentioned between the King and the Emperor, and it would not have been mentioned between Sir Charles Hardinge and Count Aehrenthal had not the latter himself introduced it and expressed some opinions about it.

Count Mensdorff said that Count Aehrenthal had objected to being held responsible for everything Dr. Friedjung wrote.

I said this was not a question of his being responsible, but of his telling Dr. Friedjung that what the latter had written was not true, and of denying officially Dr. Friedjung's statements if the matter came up again.

I am, &c.

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 30-1, No. 26, and note ⁽²⁾.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 95-6, No. 87, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

Sir C. Hardinge to Mr. Bax-Ironside.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Bax-Ironside:—

Foreign Office, October 28, 1909.

Many thanks for your letter of the 9th.

I saw your despatch No. 29 of July 24th,⁽²⁾ which was sent to me when I was away on leave. What Pichon said to you respecting the position of Italy in the Triple Alliance is practically true. We have for some time known of the agreement which exists between France and Italy, which has permitted France to withdraw her troops from the Italian frontier, and has allowed Italy to do the same, to their mutual advantage and comfort. It merely means that, in the event of war between France and Germany, Italy will take no part, whether Austria does so or not. It is obvious that Italy cannot make war against France, without exposing her coasts to the attack of the French fleet. Therefore she sees that it is better in her own

⁽¹⁾ [Hardinge MSS., Vol. III of 1909.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 27-8, No. 24.]

interests to occupy a sort of neutral position. I expect that the Germans and Austrians fully realize the situation, and would not count on Italy's help in the event of a continental war. The Triple Alliance is useful to Germany and Austria simply because it prevents Italy from joining a coalition against them. We are quite content to let things remain as they are. We have no desire to seduce Italy from the Triple Alliance, since she would be rather a thorn in the side than any assistance to France or ourselves. The relations of Italy and Austria could hardly be worse, and it is a remarkable fact that Lützow should have resigned the Embassy at Rome, because he disagreed with Aehrenthal's policy towards Italy.

The accounts of the meeting between the Emperor of Russia and the King of Italy can hardly have been pleasant reading at either Berlin or Vienna—especially at the latter Capital.

[CHARLES HARDINGE.]

No. 78.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/733.
40720/40720/09/38A.
(No. 216.)
Sir,

Rome, D. October 29, 1909.

R. November 6, 1909.

I have the honour to report that Signor Tittoni having returned from Racconigi⁽¹⁾ I asked him to receive me to-day. I found him in his own house and in bed, being slightly indisposed, but nevertheless in excellent spirits. In reply to my question whether there was anything he would wish me to let you know with regard to the tenour of his interviews with the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs he said that there was. He considered that the results of his discussions with Monsieur Isvolsky were very satisfactory. M. Isvolsky had given him the most categorical assurances that Russia had no covetousnesses or ambitions of extension in the Balkans. Her only object was to ensure that no other Power should extend her confines there. On his part he was able to give a similar assurance on behalf of Italy, who was equally anxious that no other State should further encroach beyond existing boundaries.

This being so it was clear that in the Near East the policy of Italy and Russia must be identical. But Count D'Aehrenthal on his side had also publicly declared that Austria-Hungary contemplated no further advance into the Balkans and that the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was the limit of her ambitions. The other great Powers signatories of the Treaty of Berlin had all pronounced emphatically in favour of the maintenance of the status quo as at present defined. There was therefore complete unity of view provided always that all the Powers were sincere in their professions. If this were so, it was surely desirable that it should be put on record in some form and that there should be an end of the mutual mistrust which compromised the development of the Balkan states and had kept Europe in continual unrest. Unfortunately there was a personal question which prevented Austria and Russia from establishing relations of confidence, and Signor Tittoni admitted that it was no use trying to blink the fact that the avoidance of Austrian territory in arranging the route of the Emperor of Russia's journey was deliberate and intended to emphasise the absence of cordiality. M. Isvolsky was obsessed with the conviction that Count d'Aehrenthal had not kept faith with him. But if Russia could not at the present time take any step towards approaching Austria there was no such difficulty for Italy. The idea of acting as a sort of connecting link between the Triple and the Dual Alliance on cordial terms with England has long found favour

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 79, No. 70, note (¹).]

in the eyes of Italian politicians. Signor Tittoni accordingly said that he was instructing the Italian Ambassador at Vienna to sound Count d'Aehrenthal on the question of whether it might not now be possible to give a concrete form, presumably of a collective character, to the unity of views which the Powers professed to entertain on the necessity of together maintaining the status quo in the Balkans. Without specifying any particular Power he observed that anyone which was unwilling so to co-operate would, he thought, incur the suspicion of being insincere in those professions.

I did not discover by which of the two statesmen the idea of thus sounding the Austro-Hungarian Government had been initiated. On the one hand it might be assumed that M. Isvolsky would welcome an opportunity of vicariously engaging the Austro-Hungarian Government to take part in some collective instrument after the failure of an attempt to force her to do so last winter, with the alternative, in case of refusal, of providing fresh evidence to justify mistrust of her future designs. While at the same time drawing Austria and Italy still further apart. On the other hand it is well known that Signor Tittoni as a politician is largely swayed by personal considerations and anxiety as to the appreciations of Parliament. He is ambitious of the credit to be derived from taking a leading part in European questions and would feel that in putting forward such a proposal he had nothing to lose. He is well aware that many of the elements which had threatened to compromise the success of the Emperor's visit abstained from any action because they regarded his presence in Italy as profoundly distasteful to Austria and their cordial dislike of their ally is a really stronger motive than their professed sympathies with Russian revolutionaries. If Austria-Hungary could be induced, on the suggestion of Italy, to join in some collective instrument guaranteeing the status quo in the Near East, it would count as a great success in this country where the dread of an Adriatic under Austrian control is genuine and ever-present. If she declined Italy could be represented as having made one more advance to her ally in the interests of peace and conciliation without meeting with that sympathy which her disinterested action deserved in trying to bring her friends together, while any step tending to confirm the rapprochement with Russia will, in the present temper of the country, enhance the merits of the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Whether, however, the initiative sprang from M. Isvolsky or Signor Tittoni no doubt was left in my mind that the step which the latter is taking was the result of their common agreement.

I then endeavoured to elicit from His Excellency whether anything further had passed with regard to Crete, beyond what I had learned from Signor Bollati as reported in my despatch No. 215 of the 28th instant.⁽²⁾ Signor Tittoni confirmed the statement of the Secretary-General that the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs privately admitted that he could offer no practical suggestions. His Excellency added that in view of the uncompromising refusal of Monsieur Pichon to discuss the question, there seemed to be no course open but to let it drop for the moment. Meanwhile he was taking such steps as were in his power to try and convince opinion both in Greece and Crete that nothing would be more fatal to the future of the island than that they should give Turkey the very opportunity she wanted, Crete by electing deputies to the Hellenic Chamber, and Greece by not refusing them. There was a member of the Italian Parliament, Signor Galli, who was an intimate personal friend of M. Venizelos, and who was a political ally of his own. Signor Galli was, at his suggestion, in correspondence with M. Venizelos endeavouring to inspire counsels of moderation and urging him to use his influence with the islanders to prevent them from compromising their own cause by any such ill-advised action. Signor Tittoni also lost no opportunity of impressing this view on the Greek Minister.

There can, I think, be no doubt that the result of the Russian visit has been to confirm and stimulate the tendency on the part of Italy, which has been manifest

(2) [Not reproduced.]

ever since I arrived in the country to fall more and more into line with England, France and Russia in European questions, following the bent of her natural instincts and predilections, and thus proportionately to weaken the hold of Germany and Austria on an ally whose interest in the association is now solely restricted to the guarantee which it affords her of immunity from Austrian aggression.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

MINUTES.

With regard to the last paragraph it is no doubt all to the good that Italian sentiment should be on our side but Italy will not leave the Triple Alliance on that account.

In the event of a war, Austrian hands would be pretty full with Russians and with a strong fleets [sic] in the Mediterranean, it ought not to be difficult to persuade Italy not to assist Germany, if we were unable to do more.

We know that the German Emperor attaches the greatest importance to Italian friendship.

L. M.

Italy would hardly dare to move against France and Russia in case of an European war as her coast is too exposed. In fact we know that there is a secret agreement between France and Italy on the subject.

C. H.

E. G.

Sir E. Grey.⁽³⁾

The Italian Ambassador called this afternoon and informed me that there had been a misunderstanding between Signor Tittoni and Sir R. Rodd as to the former's intentions as reported by the latter. He said that Signor Tittoni had never intended to make any proposal for a joint statement by the Powers or anything else connected with Balkan affairs. Signor Tittoni asked that the impression should be corrected.⁽¹⁾

I annex a copy of Sir R. Rodd's telegram.⁽⁵⁾

C. H.

November 16, '09.

Signor Tittoni was probably uncertain as to what he did intend.

E. G.

⁽³⁾ [This minute was written on a separate sheet.]

⁽¹⁾ [*v. infra*, p. 88, No. 80.]

⁽⁵⁾ [This is not answered in the paper. The reference is probably to Sir R. Rodd's telegram No. 161 of October 29, 1909, which gave in shorter form an account of the interview described in the above despatch. (F.O. 371/738. 39822/26/09/44A.)]

No. 74.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/738.

40888/40720/09/38.

(No. 580.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. October 30, 1909.

Sir,

R. November 8, 1909.

M. Iswolsky returned here yesterday; and was good enough to give me a short account of what passed at Racconigi.⁽¹⁾ His Excellency said that the Emperor was greatly delighted with his reception, and thoroughly enjoyed the easy and pleasant manner in which he was enabled to pass the two days with the Italian Sovereigns. M. Iswolsky had considerable conversation with M. Tittoni, the principal subject of which was naturally the situation in the Balkans. He had explained to his Italian colleague that all that Russia desired was the maintenance of the *Status quo*; that the new régime in Turkey should be consolidated and that the Balkan states should promote close and intimate relations with each other. He told M. Tittoni that Russia had little confidence in Count d'Aehrenthal, and he feared that, when the internal difficulties through which Austria-Hungary was passing were removed, it was possible that the latter statesman might again take measures for extending Austrian domination. Russia was desirous that should any disturbance occur in the existing

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 79, No. 70, note ⁽¹⁾.]

status quo, the consequences which might ensue therefrom should not at any rate be disadvantageous to the Balkan States. He had, he said, explained to M. Tittoni that he had no desire to pry into secrets or to induce him to divulge any confidences, but he would be glad to hear from him whether Italy had any engagements with Austria-Hungary which would preclude her from co-operating with Russia in pursuing the policy the outlines of which he had sketched. M. Tittoni replied that there were no engagements with Austria-Hungary which would prevent Italy from giving her co-operation to Russia on the lines which M. Iswolsky had indicated. M. Tittoni had said that Austria-Hungary in retroceding the Novi Bazar Sanjak to Turkey and in annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina had declared that she laid down the limits beyond which she did not intend to advance. If Austria-Hungary were to deviate from these declarations Italy was under no obligation to her, and was perfectly free to act as she chose. At the same time M. Tittoni had stated that he was not aware that Austria-Hungary had any secret policy such as M. Iswolsky suspected or feared, and in any case Italy certainly was no party to it. These statements on the part of M. Tittoni were, M. Iswolsky considered, eminently satisfactory. He was of opinion that if Austria-Hungary were to prosecute any further developments in her Balkan policy, Italy could be relied upon to be on the side of those Powers who desired that no further territorial changes should occur, and that the Balkan states should develop [*sic*] themselves within their own limits, and draw closer to each other.

M. Iswolsky informed me that he found that M. Tittoni took no optimistic view of the situation in Turkey. In fact he described the present régime in that country as "exécrable," and as being little if at all better than the old régime. In place of the ex-Sultan there were, he said, a group of men who followed much the same policy in order to retain the government in their own hands. I did not understand from M. Iswolsky whether the co-operation which M. Tittoni had expressed his readiness to offer extended to the consolidation of the new régime, of which he spoke in such depreciatory and apparently unnecessarily harsh terms. The main object of M. Iswolsky was undoubtedly to gain the acquiescence of M. Tittoni to the maintenance of the *status quo*, and to resisting, presumably by diplomatic means, any further encroachments of Austria-Hungary. This object he considers he has achieved; and he was relieved to ascertain that as regards Balkan policy Italy is free to take her own line.

Doubtless M. Tittoni and M. Iswolsky surveyed other questions beyond that of the Balkans, but, I understood, that on these they merely exchanged views and collated information. The important points were those which I have had the honour to report.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 75.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 871/759.

41383/26/09/44A.

(No. 598.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. November 8, 1909.

R. November 11, 1909.

With respect to an article which appeared in the November number of the "Fortnightly Review,"⁽¹⁾ entitled "Monsieur Iswolsky and Count von Aehrenthal: a rectification," the papers of this morning publish the following official *communiqué*:—

"It is stated in some organs of the European press, among others in the last number of the "Fortnightly Review," that the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. Gooch & Temperley, Vol. V, pp 810-1, No. 872, and note (2).* Reference is there made to the probable authorship of the article by Dr. E. J. Dillon. *cp. also infra, p. 87, No. 78, encl., and p. 110, No. 98.*]

himself proposed to the Austro-Hungarian Government the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and even of the Sanjak of Novibazar. The St. Petersburg Telegraph Bureau has been informed, with reference to this matter, that the above news is based on an entirely arbitrary interpretation of the secret memorandum, which the Cabinet of St. Petersburg addressed on June 19 (o.s.), 1908, to the Vienna Cabinet.⁽²⁾ This document, which formed part of a confidential correspondence between the two Cabinets, but which nevertheless seems to have been in part given to publication, had for its subject matter a whole series of questions. In fact it did among other subjects touch upon the Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Sanjak questions, but solely because the memorandum was in close connection with earlier arrangements between Russia and Austria-Hungary which referred to the above-named question. An opinion as to the true importance of the document can only be gained with a full knowledge of it, as well as of all other earlier secret Austro-Russian "Actes," in which various eventualities were foreseen. In the memorandum of June 19 (o.s.), the St. Petersburg Cabinet, while not rejecting offhand a further friendly discussion of these eventualities, at the same time declared in a positive manner the necessity of the maintenance of the *Status quo* in the Balkan Peninsula, and confirmed not less positively its unalterable views in regard to the Bosnia-Herzegovina and Sanjak question, namely that this question had an entirely European character and could not be decided by a separate agreement between Russia and Austria-Hungary. Such a declaration cannot in any case be regarded as a proposal for the annexation."

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

(2) [v. O.-U.A., I, pp. 9-11, No. 9. *cp. infra*, p. 87, No. 78, *encl.* Reference to the memorandum occurs in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, p. 810, No. 872. The Austro-Hungarian memorandum of May 1. 1909, to which reference is also made there, is printed in O.-U.A., I, pp. 5-6, No. 3.]

No. 76.

Su B. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/734.

41795/41795/09/89.

(No. 98.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. November 10, 1909.

R. November 15, 1909.

I had an interview with M. Spalaikovitch, the Secretary-General of the Servian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, this morning, in the course of which he translated to me three of the last telegrams received from M. Milovanovitch at Rome.

His Excellency reported that he had seen both M. Tittoni and the Italian Prime Minister, and that the information he had received as to what had passed at the meeting between the Emperor of Russia and the King of Italy at Racconigi was most satisfactory. As regards the general Balkan question, the agreement arrived at between Russia and Italy was, briefly stated, to the effect that the two Powers would use every endeavour to maintain the status quo, but that should that prove impossible they would co-operate to oppose any Austrian advance into the Balkan peninsula, and to see that any inevitable changes should be in the sense of the autonomy of the nationalities of the districts concerned, or to the benefit of the independent Balkan States.

M. Milovanovitch had specially urged the importance of the Sandjak of Novi Bazar, and in this respect had met with complete concurrence of M. Tittoni's part.

His Excellency further reported that the agreement for the furtherance of the Danube-Adriatic Railway Scheme was practically complete, and that the Italian Government had promised to use their influence at Sophia to bring about a Serbo-Bulgarian understanding.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

MINUTE.

The Austrians will be very angry if they get to know this.

C. H.
E. G.

No. 77.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/759.

41482/26/09/44A.

(No. 440.) Very Confidential.

Sir,

Paris, D. November 11, 1909.

R. November 12, 1909.

In conversation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday I alluded to the controversy carried on between M. Isvolski and Count von Aehrenthal by inspired articles in the press in regard to the circumstances immediately preceding the annexation by Austria of Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁽¹⁾ M. Pichon took out of his writing table drawer and read to me a very confidential telegram which he had received from the French Ambassador at Petersburg. It stated that M. Isvolski had read to him his secret note of June 19 1908, to Baron [sic] von Aehrenthal and that it bore out M. Isvolski's contention that the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina had not been suggested or prompted by him. M. Isvolski told M. Louis that if Count von Aehrenthal continued to cause misleading statements in regard to the negotiations between them to be published in the press he might find it necessary—a necessity which he would much regret—to make public certain documents the publication of which would be very embarrassing to the Austro-Hungarian Government.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

MINUTE.

M. Isvolski has given similar information to Sir A Nicolson.

R. P. M.
C. H.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [cp. Gooch & Temperley, Vol. V, Chapter XL, *passim*]

No. 78.

Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/759.

41746/26/09/44A.

(No. 378.)

Sir,

Berlin, D. November 12, 1909.

R. November 15, 1909.

I have the honour to transmit herewith translation of a paragraph published in the "Norddeutsche" of the 9th instant, entitled "A secret Memorandum addressed by the St. Petersburg Cabinet to the Cabinet of Vienna."

Two days later the "Norddeutsche" reproduces without comment the text of the telegram sent by the editor of the "Novoe Vremya" to Count Aehrenthal and of

the latter's reply to the effect that the St. Petersburg communiqué confirmed what His Excellency had said in the Delegations as to an exchange of views between Vienna and St. Petersburg having preceded the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I have, &c.

J. DE SALIS.

Enclosure in No. 78.

*Translation of extract from the Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung of
November 9, 1909.*

A Secret Memorandum addressed by the Cabinet of St. Petersburg to the
Cabinet of Vienna.

Petersburg, November 7.—In certain organs of the European press, as, for example, in the last issue of the "Fortnightly Review," the assertion is made that it was the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs who proposed to the Austro-Hungarian Government the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and even of the Sandjak of Novi-Bazar. The Petersburg Telegraph Agency has stated in reply that this piece of news emanates from a completely arbitrary interpretation of the Secret Memorandum, addressed by the Cabinet of St. Petersburg to the Cabinet of Vienna on June 19, 1908.⁽¹⁾ This document, which forms part of a confidential correspondence between two Cabinets (though in spite of that fact it has apparently partially been made public), dealt with a whole series of questions; amongst others those of Bosnia and of the Sandjak. That this was the case was only due to the fact that the Memorandum referred to was directly connected with earlier Agreements between Russia and Austria, and that it affected that question. It is therefore only possible to form a judgment as to the true significance of this document if a complete knowledge of its contents as well as of those of all the rest of the Austro-Russian secret correspondence is possessed, in which various eventualities are taken into account. Even if the St. Petersburg Cabinet in its Memorandum of June 19, 1908⁽¹⁾ declared itself ready to enter into a friendly discussion of these eventualities, it at the same time pronounced in the most decisive manner in favour of the maintenance of the status quo and equally unequivocally defined its unalterable attitude in the Bosnian and Sandjak questions, by emphasizing their exclusively European character, which prevented them from being settled by a special Agreement between Russia and Austria-Hungary.

⁽¹⁾ [v. O.-U.A., I, pp. 9-11, No. 9. *cp. supra*, p. 85, No. 75, note ⁽²⁾.]

No. 79.

Mr. Russell to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/759.

41782/26/09/44A.

(No. 186.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. November 13, 1909.

R. November 15, 1909.

With reference to the controversy now raging between the Austrian Press and the Russian Press over the diplomatic history of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, I have the honour to inform you that the following official communiqué, evincing unmistakable signs of satiety, was published in this morning's edition of the "Fremdenblatt":—

"A recent incident has attracted attention to the discussion which has of late occupied the English and Russian newspapers as to the events preceding the annexation. The Editor of the "Nowvje Wremja" [*sic*] has made a personal appeal to

Count Aehrenthal to give a true version of what actually took place between Vienna and St. Petersburg before October 1908.

"Count Aehrenthal received courteously the unusual invitation of the Russian newspaper and sent an immediate reply. Though bound to maintain the reserve due to his position, the Austro-Hungarian Minister was able to point out that everything that has been published up till now has only confirmed the declarations which he made to the Delegations with regard to the friendly exchange of views with the Petersburg Cabinet. While Count Aehrenthal has shown this fact to be beyond dispute, the Russian Minister has on the other hand recently declared that he always emphasised the European character of the Bosnian and Sandjak questions in the pourparlers which preceded the annexation. To the best of our knowledge this fact has never been denied in Austro-Hungarian quarters and the truth of it is borne out by the formal sanction of the annexation by the European Powers. The question did not lose its European character because Russia—as the Russian Minister declared in his speech to the Duma—no longer had a free hand in matters affecting the earlier obligations of Austria-Hungary and must adapt itself to the new conditions.

"After these two sets of explanations, there appears to be no further need to spin out the discussion. The question of the negotiations preceding the annexation has no political but merely an historical importance for Austria-Hungary. There is no interest for us in any further discussion. With regard to the question raised by the Russian newspaper of publishing the secret documents of the Bosnian negotiations, we believe that this must be left to the decision of the Vienna and Petersburg Cabinets."

I have, &c.

THEO. RUSSELL.

No. 80.

Sir E. Grey to Mr. Wyndham.

F.O. 371/733.

40720/40720/09/38A.

(No. 159.) Confidential.

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 20, 1909.

W[ith] r[eference] to Sir R. Rodd's desp[atch] No. 216 of the 29th ult[imo],⁽¹⁾ resp[ectin]g the conversation between the Ital[ia]n and Russian M[inisters for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] on the occasion of the recent visit of the Czar to Racconigi, I have to inform you that the Ital[ia]n Amb[assado]r at this Court called on Sir C. Hardinge on the 16th inst[ant] and stated that there had been a misunderstanding between Sir R. Rodd and Signor Tittoni as to the latter's intention to approach the Austro-Hungarian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] with a proposal for some collective instrument, to be drawn up by the Powers, recording their unanimous desire to maintain the Status quo in the Near East.

The Marquis di San Giuliano said that Signor Tittoni had never intended to make any proposal for a joint Statement or any other form of agreement in connection with Balkan affairs. Signor Tittoni was anxious that the impression sh[oul]d be corrected.

I am, &c.

[E. GREY.]

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 81-3, No. 73.]

Sir B. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/784.
43470/43470/09/89.
(No. 102.)

Belgrade, D. November 24, 1909.

Sir,

R. November 29, 1909.

I have the honour to report that I called on M. Milovanovitch yesterday to pay my respects to His Excellency on his return to Belgrade after his journey to Vienna, Berlin, London, Rome and Paris. His Excellency told me that he was well satisfied with the result of his mission, the chief object of which had been to expound the Servian point of view regarding the general situation in the Balkans to the leading statesmen of the Great Powers. His reception had everywhere been most kind and cordial, and the replies he had received were exactly what he had expected, confirming his impression that the Powers were well disposed towards Serbia, but particularly that they were most anxious for peace and for the maintenance of the status quo.

In the Western Capitals His Excellency had spoken of the proposed entente between Serbia and Bulgaria, and had appealed for support in bringing it about. He assured me that this entente, if it could be realized, would, so far as Serbia was concerned, be no menace to Turkey. If the Young Turkish movement proved successful and brought about the consolidation and development of the Ottoman Empire, no Servian statesman would have the temerity, in view of the known sympathies of the Powers, to think of joining in any undertaking against it. It was only reasonable, however, in an arrangement of this kind that the opposite possibility should also be kept in view; and an agreement between Serbia and Bulgaria, aiming, not at the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire, but at the defence of the Balkan Peninsula against Austrian expansive tendencies, would in that case be of the greatest value.

I replied that I did not think any Coalition of the Balkan States would be satisfactory unless Turkey were a party to it.

M. Milovanovitch then told me that in speaking to the Imperial Chancellor and to Herr von Schoen at Berlin, he had avoided reference to the proposed Serbo-Bulgarian entente, but had tried to impress upon them that in no circumstance could Serbia remain quiet if Austria proceeded to occupy the Sandjak of Novi Bazar. Herr von Schoen had assured him that he was quite certain that Austria had not the least intention of doing so. This assurance does not seem to have been convincing to His Excellency. He told me that the situation in the Sandjak was deplorable, that Djavid Pasha's expedition had irritated rather than quieted the Albanians, and that they were now attacking Servian villages and murdering the priests; a proceeding they had not indulged in for a long time past. If a state of complete anarchy supervened there, Austria might consider herself justified in sending troops into the Sandjak with the ostensible object of restoring order, and he assured me that in that case Serbia would certainly do the same, whatever the consequences might be.

M. Milovanovitch had also seen Count von Aehrenthal in Vienna, and had been received by him with great courtesy. Their conversation, however, had been extremely guarded on subjects of general politics, and had referred chiefly to the Drina boundary regulation and to the Commercial Treaty. As regards the latter, His Excellency thought that Count von Aehrenthal was sincerely desirous of seeing a Treaty concluded, but had great difficulties to contend with in his own country.

With regard to the Danube-Adriatic scheme, M. Milovanovitch told me that diplomatically the matter was settled, and that the only difficulty now lay in the financial arrangements.

Some days before M. Milovanovitch's return I had an interview with M. Pashitch, the Prime Minister, and asked him whether he had read a leading article in the *Sophia "Vetcherna Poshta,"* which I knew had aroused much indignation in the Belgrade press, to the effect that the Balkan Peninsula was too small for two equally strong

Slav States, and that Bulgaria, being now the stronger, should compel Serbia to renounce all her national aspirations and content herself with a secondary place. Only on this condition was a lasting friendship between the two countries possible, and an entente with Serbia under present circumstances was inconceivable. M. Pashitch replied that he had seen a resumé of the article and was obliged to admit that it was at variance with the friendly attitude now assumed by the Bulgarian Government. This was the more remarkable as the newspaper in question was known to be under the influence of the Bulgarian Government and Court. I gathered that His Excellency considered the Article a piece of "hedging," similar to that implied in King Ferdinand's meeting Prince Alexander on the Kopaonik but omitting to return King Peter's visit at Belgrade.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

MINUTE

The Turks have totally failed to pacify Albania, as we know from M. Satow's report but M. Mil[ov]anovitch's fears that the continuance of disturbances may tempt Austria to interfere in the Sanjak are probably without foundation.

L. M.

E. G.

No. 82.

Sir B. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/606.

Belgrade, November 27, 1909.

43450/28101/09/89.

D. 6 P.M.

Tel. (No. 42.) Confidential.

R. 7.15 P.M.

Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs told me to-day that King of Bulgaria's visit on 25th November had been, on the whole, very satisfactory. His Majesty had discussed with him and the Prime Minister the relations between the two countries and the general political situation, and had cordially endorsed the principle of resistance to the encroachment of any non-Balkan Power in the peninsula. He had also agreed that neither Serbia nor Bulgaria should do anything to embarrass Turkey or hinder her. His Excellency's general impression had been that the King of Bulgaria, while avoiding most carefully any binding engagement, evidently wished to improve the relations between the two countries to such an extent that, should the necessity for an *entente* or for co-operation arise, it could be brought about without delay or hindrance.

The King of Bulgaria was in plain clothes, and his visit was quite informal. Minister for Foreign Affairs told me in confidence that His Majesty [? at his request, of course] had an interview with Russian Minister during his short stay, but this fact is being kept secret, and His Majesty saw no other diplomats.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent by post to St. Petersburg (as No. 310) on November 30.]

⁽²⁾ [On this same day the Russo-Bulgarian and the Turco-Bulgarian protocols passed the Bulgarian Sobranje.]

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir C. Hardinge.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Hardinge,

St. Petersburg, December 1, 1909.

Many thanks for your letter. After his first little feeling of ill-humour in regard to the Bagdad Railway development⁽²⁾ Iswolsky has become quite rational; but he is perplexed as to what line he should follow; and he has as yet given me no indication of what he intends to propose. Of course he, with all Russians, dislikes the Bagdad Railway; and he may have hoped that want of funds would have delayed its construction for an indefinite period. This hope has now disappeared, and he is searching his mind to discover what Russia had best request and what offers he can make in order to induce Germany to come to some satisfactory terms with him. The telegram which I communicated today to him⁽³⁾ appeared to please him and he thoroughly appreciates that we have been quite loyal and frank. Still he fully anticipates that we shall secure the southern section, and personally I hope that we will. I do not know if he is exaggerating, but he gave me to understand today that this may produce a feeling in Russia against us, even among those circles friendly to us. He therefore considers that it would be advisable in order to keep the entente upright, to prop it up by some understanding as to a through route to India—not necessarily to be realised in the immediate future, as he admits that public opinion in England is not yet ripe for it, but that the matter should be discussed and the various routes, which have been suggested from time to time, examined. So far as I could gather his idea would be to set discussions going, and perhaps to obtain a concession from the Persian Government, so that he could explain to his people that England and Russia were in negotiations in regard to an important scheme which would show to the most sceptical the complete confidence which both Governments had in each other. I daresay when I am in a position to talk over the question again with Iswolsky that I shall be able to ascertain more clearly what he has in his mind. I did not wish to pursue the matter today. But if Iswolsky's forecasts are correct and not exaggerated we should, I think, be as *coulant* as possible in respect to any projects which he may propose in regard to Persian Railways.

. . . .⁽⁴⁾

Y[ou]rs ever,
A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [Hardinge MSS., Vol II of 1909.]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. VI, pp. 325-433, Chapter XLVI, *passim*.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. ib.* Vol. VI, p. 402, No. 301.]

⁽⁴⁾ [The rest of this letter refers to the amalgamation of the Russo-Chinese and Siberian Commercial Banks, Persian affairs, and the Russian attitude towards the Budget question in Great Britain.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir B. Whitehead.

F.O. 871/606.

43939/28101/09/39.

(No. 58.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 8, 1909.

The Servian Chargé d'Affaires called at the Foreign Office on November 27th and communicated the enclosed copy of a telegram sent by the Servian Government to the Servian Minister at Constantinople, in order to remove any misinterpretation which might be placed on the recent meeting at Belgrade between the Kings of Bulgaria and Servia.

Sir Charles Hardinge, who received M. Grouitch, informed the latter that the despatch of a friendly telegram of this kind seemed to him to be a wise proceeding and should reassure the Turkish Government that any improvement in the relations between Bulgaria and Servia was not intended as a menace to Turkey. It was desirable from every point of view that this improvement should be maintained, but the Servian Government should be prudent and not provoke the suspicion or hostility of either Austria or Turkey by any formal alliance which might be regarded as directed against either of these Powers, and thus induce them to combine against them. M. Grouitch said that he quite understood, and that this had been the motive of the telegram to Constantinople.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

Enclosure in No. 84.

Traduction d'une dépêche du Ministre des Affaires Etrangères au Ministre de Serbie à Constantinople, au sujet de la visite de S[a] M[ajesté] le Roi de Bulgarie à S[a] M[ajesté] le Roi de Serbie.

Tél.

Sa Majesté le Roi Ferdinand a exprimé hier le désir de se rencontrer—à l'occasion de son retour en Bulgarie—avec Sa Majesté le Roi. Accédant à ce désir, Sa Majesté a reçu le Roi Ferdinand à la gare, d'où les deux souverains se sont rendus ensemble, en voiture, au Palais, où a été servie une collation dans une étroite intimité. La rencontre des souverains des deux États voisins, quoique n'ayant aucun but politique, est cependant certainement la preuve des bonnes relations qui existent entre les deux souverains et Leurs États; elle montrera aussi que ces bonnes relations seront encore affermies et se développeront dans l'intérêt autant de ces États que de la Péninsule Balcanique et celui de la paix européenne. Afin de paralyser des interprétations tendencieuses et d'empêcher des intrigues auxquelles cette rencontre peut éventuellement donner lieu, vous voudrez bien, en portant ce qui précède à la connaissance de la Sublime Porte, déclarer encore une fois, à cette occasion, que le Gouvernement Serbe attache, par dessus toute chose, le plus grand prix aux relations amicales et à la confiance réciproque avec la Turquie, qui sont basées sur la communauté des intérêts; vous ajouterez que par suite le rapprochement de la Serbie avec la Bulgarie ne peut en aucun cas contenir quoi que ce soit qui serait, directement ou indirectement, dirigé contre la Turquie, mais que toute entente avec la Bulgarie—si d'une manière générale elle venait à se réaliser—ne pourrait qu'être d'une nature telle que la Turquie aussi pourrait la voir avec plaisir et éventuellement s'y associer.

26 novembre, 1909.

No. 85.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. T. Russell.

F.O. 971/759.
43405/26/09/44.
(No. 127.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 8, 1909.

Count Mensdorff called at the Foreign Office on the afternoon of the 19th ult[imo], and was received by Sir Charles Hardinge. Count Mensdorff stated that, in reply to a *personal* observation made to him by Sir Charles Hardinge to the effect that the publication of an Austrian blue-book was unfortunate and likely to reopen the controversy of last year, he had received a letter from Count Aehrenthal

explaining that the selection of papers had been made with the greatest care in order to avoid creating any further polemics on the events of last winter, but that on account of large credits that had to be voted for the Turkish indemnity &c. it had been found absolutely necessary to publish some papers for Parliament.

[I am, &c.

E. GREY.]

No. 86.

Mr. Lindley to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/606.

46774/46774/09/7.

(No. 136.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sofia, D. December 20, 1909.

R. December 28, 1909.

I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of an interesting Memorandum drawn up by Mr. McGregor, His Majesty's Consul at Sofia, of a conversation he had recently with King Ferdinand.

Mr. McGregor has for a long time been on intimate terms with His Majesty and the Royal Family, who fully share the universal regret felt by Bulgarian society at his approaching departure.

The opinions expressed by King Ferdinand at this interview speak for themselves, and I would merely remark that the pessimistic views which His Majesty apparently holds on the subject of Turkey are held equally in official circles in Sofia. It is certain, however, that the latter have not given up their Macedonian aspirations, even if it be true that, for the moment, His Majesty has done so.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS O. LINDLEY.

Enclosure in No. 86.

Memorandum by Mr. P. J. C. McGregor.

(Confidential.)

Sofia, December 8, 1909.

On the occasion of my approaching departure from Sofia, I had the honour of being received by King Ferdinand this afternoon in an audience which lasted for an hour and a quarter.

His Majesty, whose attitude was one of most gracious cordiality, was pleased to express in flattering terms His regret at my departure, and engaged in animated conversation on a great variety of topics, most of which, however, from their character, and the manner in which His Majesty treated them, were of too personal a nature to be touched on here.

I should, however, mention that, previously to my interview, His Majesty had sent one of His Private Secretaries to enquire whether I could accept a decoration. I had replied that I was debarred from doing so by regulations, and that His Majesty's gracious intention was in my eyes of equal value with any material souvenir. In my subsequent conversation with King Ferdinand His Majesty returned to the subject with some insistence, but I felt compelled to maintain my attitude, expressing my regret that I must decline the proffered honour.

The King seemed in excellent health and spirits and I gathered that he was satisfied with the general state of affairs in Bulgaria. He only made a passing

allusion to Macedonia, saying "J'en ai fait mon deuil," and He did not mention Servia, but He dwelt at great length on affairs in Turkey, with more particular reference to Armenia and Albania. His Majesty said that He had acquired a great esteem for the Armenians in Bulgaria; the worst enemy of that gifted race had been Prince Lobanoff, and Russia had committed an unpardonable crime in her spoliation of the Armenian Church. He made no secret of His scepticism regarding the regeneration of the Ottoman Empire by the Young Turks and He is of opinion that in blindly fostering the New Régime, Europe is cherishing a viper in her bosom, as the utmost that Young Turkey can ever achieve is the formation of an armed despotism even more reactionary and more anti-Christian than the Turkey of Abdul Hamid. The massacres of Adana were more atrocious in details than those of 1896 and the responsible authors had escaped scot-free, while Europe had remained ostentatiously indifferent. Where was the conscience of Europe and how was it that even in Great Britain all humanitarian feeling had been stifled by a new-born enthusiasm for the Turk? The same might be said of Albania, where an admirable race was being left to grapple unaided with the corruption of Constantinople and the pernicious propaganda of Austria, Italy and Greece. His Majesty's language in treating this subject was most energetic, and, as my personal views regarding the possibility of Turkish regeneration are well known to Him, I was unable to do more than assent to the general drift of His remarks. His Majesty considers that Europe as a whole is profoundly demoralised and that everything points to "un écroulement général qui ébranlera bien des trônes." He regards German ambition as a European danger, affecting Great Britain more than any other Power, and He can only deplore the light-heartedness with which the question seems to be regarded by diplomatists and statesmen generally.

The King made a very sympathetic reference to Sir G. Buchanan, His Majesty's late Minister at Sofia, who, He said, had been a true friend to Him and to His country during the trying period when opinion in Great Britain, even in the most exalted quarters, had been unjustifiably prejudiced against Him.

Nobody who was acquainted with His personal feelings towards Austria or with the history of Bulgaria in recent years could reasonably suppose that the Declaration of Bulgarian Independence had been "abgemacht" with the Emperor Francis Joseph at Budapest. It was true that the Emperor was His Cousin, and the ties of blood must always be respected "entre gens de bonne maison," but His policy was and always would be dictated by none other than the real interests of Bulgaria.

His Majesty added that Count Khevenhüller's statement to the President of the French Republic regarding the approaching Declaration of Independence was utterly unwarranted: "un crime politique" which He could only pardon in a man with one foot in the grave. He had written to Monsieur Fallières to say so.

His Majesty expressed His regret that, owing to the Queen's absence, it would not be possible for Her to take leave of me personally, but He stated that She fully shared His regret at my departure, and He also added that He would like me to call on the Crown Prince and the other Royal Children before leaving Sofia. His Majesty then graciously dismissed me.

P. J. C. McG[REGOR].

Sofia, December 8, 1909.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/734.
46589/45110/09/39.
(No. 206.)

Vienna, D. December 21, 1909.

Sir,

R. December 24, 1909.

As will have been gathered from preceding despatches, the chief interest in the proceedings of the Friedjung trial⁽¹⁾ lies in the question of the authenticity of the 'documents,' on which the whole case for the defence is necessarily grounded.

Meanwhile it cannot be denied that the President of the Court shows himself remarkably biassed, both in the partial manner in which he allows the defendant's counsel to bully the witnesses for the plaintiffs and in the remarks tending to discredit their evidence which he frequently addresses to those witnesses or to the Court. Two interpellations have recently been made in Parliament on this subject.

It may be of interest to report shortly a speech made in the Chamber by Dr. Kramarz, leader of the Young Czechs, in which he said he had always understood the annexation was based on the altered conditions in Turkey and the necessity of giving a constitution to Bosnia and Herzegovina. But it was not necessary to base this annexation on such revelations and forged documents as were now being cited in the Friedjung trial. The charges of high treason which were thus being spread broadcast would react on the whole internal policy of Austria-Hungary. The principle of Neoslavism was respect for the existing boundaries of the State and educational and economic union of the Slav population which would be of the greatest benefit to the whole State. Before the annexation Neoslavism desired to bring about the closest relations between Austria and Russia. That this result has not been obtained was not the fault of the Slavs but of Austria-Hungary's foreign policy. The Croatian deputies had come to Vienna, hoping to find justice and a far better treatment than they had received at Agram: they were however not being treated with due impartiality in the Court.

Side issues such as the organisation of bands, the manufacture of bombs and events connected with the Agram trial have been frequently discussed. In regard to the latter trial, Professor Markovitch observed: "We have disputed that verdict and recorded hundreds of inaccuracies committed in the course of the trial." The Professor was subjected to a long cross-examination in regard to the nature of the Slovenski Jug and the character of its journal. He maintained that during the time when he is supposed to have presided over sittings of the Society (to which the famous documents refer) he was in reality in Berlin, attending law conferences.

Evidence on the question of the actual corruption of Serbo-Croatian Deputies, which at times falls into the background, is still conflicting; a former Governor of Fiume, Count Szapary, who was stated to have given bribes to Supilo, has declared that he never knew the latter, though he had supported his newspaper with a small

⁽¹⁾ [The trial of Dr. Friedjung, the Austrian historian, which opened on December 9, and closed on December 22, resulted from his attack on the loyalty of the deputies of the Serbo-Croat Coalition in an article in the *Neue Freie Presse* of March 25, 1900. In this and other articles Dr. Friedjung had accused the Coalition of having issued propaganda against Austria, and of having received funds for that purpose from the Servian Secretary of State, Dr. Spalaiković. The defence was that the articles were based on official documents supplied through the Austro-Hungarian diplomatic service. Dr. Spalaiković, with Professor Marković of Belgrade University, who was also implicated, was able to prove that the Friedjung documents were forgeries, and in November, 1910, a Serbian named Vassić volunteered the confession that he had fabricated them, with the connivance of the Austro-Hungarian Legation at Belgrade. Vassić was tried and condemned to five years' penal servitude. (Sir R. Paget to Sir E. Grey, No. 80, November 19, 1910, F.O. 371/829. 43108/43108/10/3; No. 82, November 26, 1910, F.O. 371/829. 44815/43108/10/3; cp. H. Wickham Steed: *Through Thirty Years*, I, pp. 308-16. v. also *Ö.-U.A.*, II, pp. 493-682, Nos. 1764-1972, *passim*, which throws some light on the validity of Vassić's confession. Contrast R. W. Seton-Watson. *The Southern Slav Question*, (London, 1911), Chapter 10. v. *infra*, p. 236, No. 208, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

subscription. Supilo and his new counsel proposed to call a number of distinguished witnesses as to the former's character, but the Court rejected the proposal as irrelevant. Fresh interest is daily furnished by the appearance of new witnesses. After some debate on the admissibility of Servian witnesses, the Court decided to hear any such witnesses who might voluntarily appear on the 18th. On that day Monsieur Spalaikovich, chef de section at the Belgrade Foreign Office appeared and stated that his respect for justice and his desire that there should be no change in the relations between Austria-Hungary and Servia had determined him to come to Vienna. The documents in Friedjung's case were fabricated and the affair was a mystery. He entered into all the documents in detail giving reasons for which they could not possibly be genuine. No member of the Serbo-Croatian Coalition, he declared, had received money from the Servian Government. Should the evidence already given not be found sufficiently convincing, the Servian Government would, if necessary, beg all the Great Powers to convince themselves, through their Representatives at Belgrade of the correctness of the assertions made. Dr. Friedjung, nevertheless, continued to assert that Monsieur Spalaikovich had made journeys to Bosnia taking with him money for distribution, and cited an article by Monsieur Pinon in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, in which Monsieur Spalaikovich is stated to be the soul of the Pan-Serb agitation.

Dr. Friedjung has read a statement which he had received from Dr. Wekerle, the Hungarian Prime Minister, (of which he was authorised to make use) to the effect that not only from Monsieur Spalaikovich's report but also from many other documents he knew that several members of the National Servian party and the partisans of the Pan-Serb movement were in shameful relations with Servia.

Dr. Friedjung has made further statements regarding the documents. He said the original minutes of every sitting from November 1907 of the Slovenski Jug had been brought and photographed or copied, and then replaced in the Society's archives. The most interesting portion of his statements may be given in his own words:—"I have up to the present said nothing as to whether the Archduke Franz Ferdinand or Count Aehrenthal or Baron Beck saw or have seen the documents. But as one of the witnesses has stated that he knows these documents have already for some years past come to the possession and knowledge of these high personages, I am now both justified and obliged to declare that these documents certainly came to the knowledge of all the leading authorities who had to see to the defence of the Monarchy." This statement is naturally looked upon as finally implicating the Government in the case. In this connection the Conservative Catholic Journal 'Vaterland' observes that it now appears as if the defendants were going to be left in the lurch by those responsible quarters whence they would seem to have received their doubtful 'documents.' The 'Vaterland' believes that material does exist which might exculpate the defendants and this material ought now to be brought forward. This may possibly be a hint from a very high quarter (in which this journal is believed to enjoy favour) to the Foreign Office to abandon its attitude of complete detachment from the case.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

Sir B. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/982.

958/958/10/39.

(No. 3.) Confidential.

Sir,

Belgrade, D. January 5, 1910.

R. January 10, 1910.

I have the honour to report that on the 26th Ultimo the Turkish Minister of Finance, Djavid Bey, visited Belgrade, and was entertained at luncheon by the King and at dinner in the Turkish Legation, on both of which occasions he met and had long conversations with Monsieur Milivanovitch.

I had no opportunity of seeing His Excellency since Djavid Bey's visit, as he has been unwell, and I therefore called on Monsieur Spalaikovitch yesterday to endeavour to learn what had passed.

He told me that Monsieur Milovanovitch had endeavoured in these interviews to dispel the apprehensions which were apparently entertained by the Turkish Government with regard to the improvement in the relations between Serbia and Bulgaria, and he translated to me a telegram which his Excellency had sent to St. Petersburg immediately after Djavid Bey's visit, the substance of which was as follows :—

Monsieur Milovanovitch had assured Djavid Bey that Serbia would not take part in any Balkan entente or coalition which was directed against Turkey, or in which she was not associated. He had explained that the steps taken to bring about a better understanding between Serbia and Bulgaria merely had the object of preventing friction and conflicts between the two States, and their aim and limit on Serbia's part was to render the relations between Serbia and Bulgaria as friendly and cordial as those between Serbia and Turkey happily already were. His Excellency had promised, moreover, that the Servian Government would not enter into any closer bond with Bulgaria without informing the Turkish Government and inviting their adhesion.

To this communication Monsieur Isvolsky had replied expressing approval of Monsieur Milovanovitch's language to Djavid Bey.

Monsieur Spalaikovitch then said that the Servian point of view in the matter was perfectly simple and natural. Serbia needed the friendship of Turkey at the present moment on account of the transit trade through Turkish territory and in order to bring about the completion of the Danube-Adriatic Railway. She would therefore put all other considerations aside for the time being in order to remain on good terms with Turkey. He added confidentially, however, that the Servian Government learned with regret from their Consular Officers in European Turkey that the state of affairs there was now even worse than under the Hamidian régime, particularly in the districts in which Serbia was specially interested, viz. the Sandjak of Novi Bazar, Old Serbia, and the Vilayet of Kossovo. Those districts were practically in a state of anarchy, and brigandage was rampant there, so much so that a number of Servian Churches had had to be closed, and the priests had taken refuge in Uskub, where they had appealed to the Vali and to the foreign Consuls for assistance and protection. This state of things was most unsatisfactory both for Bulgaria and Serbia. Both States were aware that the Young Turkish régime enjoyed the sympathies of the Western European Powers, and that at the present moment any action they might take for the protection of their co-nationals in the Ottoman Dominions would be severely judged. They had entertained the hope that the Constitutional Government in Turkey would at least have produced some temporary improvement in the condition of the Christian population, which would enable Serbia and Bulgaria to remain quiet and would have satisfied their public opinion. As Monsieur Paprikoff had expressed it to Monsieur Simitch, the Servian

Minister in Sofia, the Bulgarian Government wished to remain perfectly passive and to abstain from all action by bands or otherwise, until the faith of Western Europe in the Young Turks had gradually declined, and the situation had become more ripe for a thorough solution. If the Young Turks had carried on the reforms inaugurated by the Powers, if they had established an efficient Gendarmerie and maintained order, this would have been easy, but as things now stood there was a serious danger that events might be precipitated and a conflagration break out before the general political situation in Europe had taken a turn favourable to the Christian populations, and before the Powers had finally realised that the Turk was incorrigible.

Monsieur Spalaikovitch added that the Bulgarians, who had but recently been emancipated from Turkish rule, knew their former masters better than the Servians did, and moreover that Bulgaria, whose future lay entirely in the direction of Macedonia and the Vilayet of Adrianople, was more directly concerned in this matter than Servia, who had many other interests besides.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

MINUTES.

An interesting despatch but all Monsieur Spalaikovitch says should be discounted.⁽¹⁾

A. P.

Jan[uary] 17, 1910.

R. P. M

We have contradictory accounts of what is going on in the Macedonian Vilayets but this account tallies with much that we have heard both from Sofia and Constantinople.

L. M.

C. H.

Very ominous.

F. G.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document, p. 95, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

No. 89.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/998.

Vienna, January 5, 1910.

542/542/10/44A.

D. 8.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 1.) Confidential.

R. 9.45 P.M.

Bulgaria.

Baron von Aehrenthal told me to-day that King of Bulgaria, when here ten days ago, in conversation with him showed an inclination to believe that Austria-Hungary still harboured the desire to advance in the direction of Balkans. Baron von Aehrenthal told me he had shown some astonishment at King's remarks and had replied to him that the Austro-Hungarian Government not only did not entertain any desire to possess Turkish territory, but that they would do all in their power to prevent a collapse of present régime in Constantinople.

It seems to me that Baron von Aehrenthal suspects that King has been encouraged to believe in evil intentions of Austro-Hungarian Government towards Turkey through some Russian source, probably Russian Minister at Sophia.

As regards abandonment of King's journey to St. Petersburg to attend Grand Duke Michael's funeral, Baron von Aehrenthal was inclined at first to believe it was due to some political reason, but now he thinks King's illness was genuine, as he already complained of feeling unwell when in Vienna.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Eduard Grey.

F.O. 371/833.

907/907/10/7.

(No. 5.) Very Confidential.

Vienna, D. January 8, 1910.

R. January 10, 1910.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that last night I had a conversation with a person who is in close contact with Count Aehrenthal on the subject of the recent relations between Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary, and as the information which I obtained from this gentleman throws an interesting light on late events, I venture to report it to you.

When about the middle of last February—that is to say at the height of the Servian crisis—the King of Bulgaria came to Vienna it seems that he expected to be signally rewarded for the zeal he had recently shown in favour of Austria and for the strong anti-Servian attitude assumed by the Bulgarian Government. His hopes, however, were disappointed. I believe he expected that Count Aehrenthal would have shown his gratitude for the services rendered by the Bulgarian Government to Austria-Hungary at this critical period by promptly recognizing the independence of Bulgaria. When this was refused the King appears to have been deeply incensed, and he then turned towards Russia and went to St. Petersburg to attend the funeral of the Grand-duke Vladimir. From that moment, I am told, he has shown great irritation against Count Aehrenthal, and this had been increased throughout last year by a series of what the King—who is very sensitive—considers to be personal affronts inflicted upon himself. Thus he has taken it deeply to heart that the Emperor has steadily refused to confer the Golden Fleece upon him, and he has felt this supposed slight all the more as this decoration was conferred in the month of July upon the Crown Prince of Roumania whose children, like his own, are being brought up in the Orthodox faith. I am told that the King accuses Count Aehrenthal of having used his influence in this matter against him, but I believe, on the contrary, that Count Aehrenthal would be perfectly willing to see the King satisfied by the gift of the Golden Fleece, but that the Emperor's religious scruples restrain him from conferring this high distinction upon King Ferdinand.

When in the month of July King Ferdinand, still in ill-humour with the Austro-Hungarian Government, came to this country and hovered around Ischl, saying he did not wish to disturb the Emperor by asking to be received by His Majesty, he was taken at his word and no invitation was sent to him to come to Ischl. This was the last straw which broke the King's patience. He expressed his sentiments, I am told, in very forcible language against Austria-Hungary and Count Aehrenthal, and declared that as the door of the Imperial villa at Ischl was shut to him, he would go to Belgrade.

Meanwhile Count Aehrenthal in his conversations with me during the summer and the autumn treated the King's repeated visits to Austria-Hungary as matters of no political importance, and he expressed to me a kind of calm indifference as to the King's movements, repeatedly saying that Bulgaria would neither follow a Russian nor an Austro-Hungarian policy, and that the King was a person it was quite impossible to depend upon.⁽¹⁾

My informant then proceeded to tell me that in the month of November King Ferdinand came to Vienna in a state of more than ordinary fury against Count Aehrenthal, and that he was then determined on arriving here to write to the Emperor to say that as so little consideration was shown by His Majesty's Government to himself, he thought it best to resign the command of the Austrian regiment of which he had been appointed the Chief. King Ferdinand was at the last moment dissuaded from doing so by his confidential adviser here, but Count Aehrenthal, having heard what the King's intentions had been, and desirous of preventing a scandal which would

⁽¹⁾ [Marginal note by Sir Charles Hardinge on the Confidential Print: "Very true. C H."]

only have given satisfaction to Russia. decided to address a letter to the King when he passed through Vienna early last month, asking for an interview with him.

A meeting was arranged, and I understand that both the King and Count Aehrenthal had a very frank and open conversation together. Count Aehrenthal asked the King what his grievances against Austria-Hungary were; the substance of the King's reply may be summed up as follows:—in Bulgaria there was no current of public feeling in favour of Austria-Hungary; there was, however, a current in favour of Russia. All the Ministers, the officers and the leading people had pro-Russian proclivities; scarcely any favoured Austria-Hungary. The King's position was therefore a very difficult one: his training and his attachments were Austrian; his political sense made him see the danger of friction with Austria-Hungary and the little practical value for his country of friendship with Russia. Bulgaria had natural ambitions in the direction of Macedonia in the event of a collapse of Turkish rule in Europe. These ambitions could not be satisfied if Austria opposed them. As for Russia she neither could have nor had any political interest in doing so; therefore it was essential for Bulgaria to be on good terms with Austria-Hungary. The King impressed upon Count Aehrenthal that if the latter desired the establishment of really good relations between his country and Bulgaria, it was absolutely necessary that the Austro-Hungarian Government, instead of exposing him to snubs, should do all in their power to raise his prestige, not only in his own country but also abroad; in fact, he pointed out that when he came to Austria-Hungary he should not be allowed to disappear in the crowd like a mere tourist, but that he should receive the treatment usually extended to the Sovereigns of independent States. Turning to the question of the political attitude of Austria-Hungary towards Bulgaria, the King seems to have expressed his dissatisfaction at what he considered to be the exaggerated friendship shown by the Austro-Hungarian Government to the new Turkish "régime" and to have asked Count Aehrenthal "warum hetzen Sie mir immer die Türken auf den Hals?"

My informant confirmed what Count Aehrenthal had said to me, that is that he had replied to the King that all he was striving for was to maintain peace in the Balkans, and that if he was friendly to Turkey it was because he believed that the maintenance of Turkish rule in Europe was the greatest guarantee of peace in the Near East. My informant added that Count Aehrenthal made up his differences with the King and received assurances from him that in his relations with Servia he would do nothing which could in any way injure the Dual Monarchy, and that Austria-Hungary must not be alarmed if he should see himself compelled at times to show some civility to Russia and apparent subservience to her interests. It looks therefore as if, for the moment at least, a perfect understanding exists between Count Aehrenthal and the King with regard to Near Eastern questions.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT

No. 91.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 171/977.

1749/1749/10/38.

(No. 17.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. January 10, 1910.

R. January 17, 1910.

M. Sazonow mentioned to me to-day that it was unfortunate that the Bulgarian Loan had been transacted at Vienna and not at Paris, especially as the funds which were provided were French and not Austrian. The Banque des Pays-Bas, who had in

hand the Hungarian Loan, was, he explained, unwilling that another foreign loan should be simultaneously quoted on the Bourse, and was able to prevent the official sanction being accorded to the quotation of the Bulgarian Loan. The latter was consequently issued at Vienna, under the auspices of the Bank Verein, but with the assistance of the Credit Mobilier and two other French Banks. M. Sazonow said that the Bulgarian Minister had told him that the proceeds would be devoted to the construction of strategic railways, and not to the purchase of armaments, with which Bulgaria was well supplied. M. Sazonow remarked that the Banque des Pays Bas had had many transactions with the Russian Government, and should have understood that the latter would have much preferred that the Bulgarian rather than the Hungarian Loan had been launched in Paris.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTE.

The French Gov[ernment] have not allowed the quotation of the Hungarian loan on the French Bourse.

C. H.
E. G.

No. 92.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir C. Hardinge.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Hardinge,

St. Petersburg, January 12, 1910.

Many thanks for your letter of the 5th.⁽²⁾ I am sorry to hear that the Government of India are so strongly opposed to the trans-Persian railway. In the first place I personally do not believe in half-hearted friendships or understandings. If you distrust the good faith of your partner it would be better to have nought to do with him; but if you enter into undertakings with him it is wiser to treat him with complete confidence. The Russians, so far as I have been able to observe, have buried all the animosities, jealousies and suspicions of the past, and have acted towards us with perfect confidence and loyalty—and I think that their attitude in the Persian question is clear proof of this. If we show a want of reciprocity we should not strengthen but rather weaken the understanding. This latter requires all possible nurture and care to maintain its vitality: it may be short-lived, or it may develop into robust adolescence. The prospects of its life depend on many conditions which can hardly yet be foreseen, but it is necessary that the two parents should do their best for their offspring at the outset. If the understanding comes to an early end, the results to my mind will be far more inconvenient to us than to Russia. But leaving generalities, to come to the more special point of the railway. Humanly speaking it may be taken that a long time will elapse before it would come into the field of practical politics, and moreover we would have our hands free to choose our time when we should construct our section. I consider that our acceptance in principle of the Russian proposal would not lead to any danger in the proximate future to the safety of our Indian frontier: while we should show a friendly disposition and do much towards buttressing up the understanding. A refusal to entertain the project would disappoint our friends in this country. Before the moment arrives when serious steps would be taken for realising the project, our understanding would have passed through its probationary period, and if it had

⁽¹⁾ [Hardinge MSS., Vol. II of 1910.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It refers very briefly to the questions of the Bagdad Railway and the Persian Railway scheme. (Hardinge MSS., Vol. III of 1910.)]

emerged successfully, well and good. If not, well, we should have to take what measures would be in our power to render the scheme as little dangerous as possible⁽³⁾

Y[ou]rs ever.

A. NICOLSON.

⁽³⁾ [The omitted parts of this letter refer to the amount of the loan to be given to Persia: the proposed Manchurian railway lines; the situation in Macedonia; M. Isvolski's relations with Count von Achrenthal; and certain articles to the Russian press.]

No. 93.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1001.

2547/2520/10/44.

(No. 24.) Confidential.

Sir,

Constantinople, D. January 14, 1910

R. January 24, 1910.

I had this morning a conversation with M. Daneff, the Ex-Bulgarian Prime Minister of the Zankovist party, who has been spending a week here. He said that he had come on the suggestion of Djavid Bey and his object had been to endeavour to ascertain what are the real feelings of this country towards Bulgaria. He himself was strongly in favour of a good understanding with Turkey, a view which you, Sir, had given him to understand you shared. But, he added, there must be conditions attached to such an understanding.

He had been privileged to meet most of the leading men of this country and he had been somewhat disappointed. He was unable to get anything definite from them. They all spoke of the necessity of a good understanding but when it came to discussing the lines on which such could be effected they appeared to wish to avoid all questions of detail. The new Grand Vizier alone seemed to be more amenable, and he had explained to His Highness and the latter had agreed that what was necessary was that the two peoples should have the causes of their mutual antipathy removed. Bulgaria had no designs on Macedonia but they did demand that the Bulgars of Macedonia should receive fair treatment and in this case fair treatment would be accorded to the Mussulmans of Bulgaria. His country had no desire for war. They already spent too much on their army. Their desire was to develop commercially. They had shown their magnanimity last year when all was confusion here and the Turkish army weak, on which occasion they had abstained from attacking Turkey. This was strong evidence that the King still controlled the situation and should encourage the Turks in dismissing from their mind the possibility of public opinion getting the better of the Sovereign. But however little they desired war it might come. There were moments in the lives of all nations when driven to exasperation they set aside wisdom and caution and were ready to sacrifice their blood for their oppressed co-religionists.

I told M. Daneff that I had let no opportunity go by of advising the Turkish Government to make every effort to come to a good understanding with Bulgaria. We must not be impatient. So far the state of affairs had been so unstable that no Government had ventured into any special line of foreign policy but had been fully occupied with internal affairs. It was to be hoped that gradually the authority of the Government would be more pronounced. At present it was impossible to say where the authority lay, whether with the Gov[ernment,] the Army or the Committee.⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ [Sir Edward Grey's despatch No. 26 was sent to Sir Gerard Lowther on February 8, approving of the language held by him on this occasion. (F.O. 371/1001. 2547/2520/10/44.)]

M. Daneff repudiated the idea of an alliance between Bulgaria and Servia. The King's friendly visit to Servia merely tended to improve the good relations which should exist with a neighbouring state.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

No. 94.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey

F.O. 371/1002.
2578/2578/10/44A.
(No. 6.)

Vienna, D. January 15, 1910.

R. January 24, 1910.

Sir,

The Vienna press and official circles here have for some time past shown a growing uneasiness as to the stability of the new Turkish régime at Constantinople for it seems just now to be assailed by endless worries and troubles. The fall of Hilmi Pasha has thrown a curious light upon the struggle which has been going on for a long time past at Constantinople between the Committee and the army. The Austrian press is of opinion that it will require all the sagacity of the Turkish political leaders to ward off a serious crisis from arising in their country. There is trouble along the Turco-Persian frontier; in Mesopotamia there is strong agitation against the Lynch Concession, and in Macedonia great irritation has been caused by the severe application there of the measures for the suppression of bands, and there seems to be no strong hand at Constantinople capable of dealing with these complicated problems. To add to the confusion of affairs in the Ottoman dominions the reports received here tend to show that the Committee is gradually losing ground and that its antagonism to the army is daily becoming more pronounced. In well-informed circles here it is said that the committee has shown that it is not strong enough to impose one of its members as Grand Vizier, and that Hakki Pasha does not carry sufficient weight to ensure him a long tenure of office. So the Powers must be prepared to see him soon fall like Hilmi Pasha, perhaps—like the latter—over the Lynch question. The Young Turk Party, in their present desperate straits, feel the necessity of exaggerating their zeal for the national prestige, and they will therefore oppose to the utmost of their ability any concession to Greece with regard to Crete, any show of amiability towards France in the Tripoli-Tunesian frontier dispute, and any creation of a foreign monopoly for the navigation of the Tigris.

Of the many troubles which cause anxiety to the Turkish statesmen, the one which interests the Dual Monarchy most is the Albanian question. The chauvinistic ardour of the Young Turks which urges them to do their utmost to unify and to centralise the administration of the Empire, has led them into a struggle with the Albanian population from which serious disturbances may ensue in a Turkish province close to the Austrian frontier, and this necessitates that Count Aehrenthal should be on his guard as to possible eventualities, however desirous he may be for the present not to interfere in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire.

The Austrian press gives some interesting information as to the grievances of the Albanian population; the principal of these seem to be as follows: the Albanians demand that the Turkish officials in their country should in future be able to speak the Albanian tongue; a general amnesty is asked for for [sic] recent events; and the Albanians clamour for special treatment with regard to military service and to the collection of taxes. It is alleged here that one of the chief causes of complaint on the part of the Albanians against the new Turkish régime is that the Young Turk Com-

mittec insists that henceforth the school language shall be Turkish and to this the Albanians offer a strenuous opposition, and they put forward a demand for the foundation of a college for the training of Albanian school-teachers. It is needless to add that the attempts of the Turkish authorities to disarm the Albanian population have aroused the greatest animosity among them against the Turks.

The question which is being asked in Austria-Hungary is whether the Young Turk régime is likely to feel itself strong enough to override the opposition of the Albanians, or whether—like the late Sultan—it will find it more convenient to give way to Albanian demands and so avoid a desperate struggle with a warlike race. This question is one which interests Austria-Hungary very closely, and I think the general desire here is that the Porte may be wise enough to temporize and so avoid starting a struggle with the Albanians at the present moment, for the Austro-Hungarian Government could not long remain indifferent to the creation of a state of anarchy so near their frontiers.

In talking to Count Aehrenthal I have noticed that the optimism which he showed with regard to the new order of things at Constantinople a few months ago, is gradually giving way to a feeling of uneasiness as to the immediate future in the Near East. A few days ago he said to me that things were not going well at Constantinople and that the position of the Young Turk Party seemed to him to be growing less secure than it had been after their brilliant triumph over the forces of reaction in the month of April last. The old Turks, he added, had not appreciably diminished in numbers: they were disorganised and terrorised for the moment, it is true, but they were there all the same and the masses were on their side, and—according to Count Aehrenthal—it seemed probable that it was only a question of time before they would reassert themselves again. The fall of Hilmi Pasha had been a disappointment to him; he did not see any great advantage for Turkey in the appointment of Hakki Pasha as Grand Vizier, and he said he looked in vain for the advent of a strong hand to direct Turkey through the throes of her new birth. Count Aehrenthal still spoke to me of his hope that things might right themselves and that the unexpected might happen, that is to say that a real consolidation of the new régime on the Bosphorus would be brought about, but he unmistakably showed uneasiness, I will not say anxiety, as to the possible development of events in the immediate future in the Near East.

As Count Aehrenthal on the last occasion, on which I saw him passed from the discussion of the present state of things in Turkey to that of the relations which now exist between the Dual Monarchy and Russia. I think there must have been some connection in his mind between these two questions. I feel certain that Count Aehrenthal is most desirous of bettering the relations between Vienna and St. Petersburg without loss of time, as—should trouble arise in the Balkans owing to a change in the situation in Constantinople—he foresees that the international political outlook in the Balkans would be greatly complicated by the jealousies and misunderstandings which would arise between the Russian and the Austro-Hungarian Governments. Prince Ourousoff, the Russian Ambassador, whose health is bad, is at present absent from Vienna and he will not return here till the winter is over; so there seems little likelihood that for some time to come any serious exchange of views will take place between the Vienna Cabinet and that of St. Petersburg. At the present moment is this to the interest of Russia? Would it not be wiser if M. Isvolsky could bring himself to open communications with Count Aehrenthal through some confidential channel to see whether it be not possible to come to a general understanding with him as to the attitude which should be assumed by the Russian and the Austro-Hungarian Governments should a breakdown of the new Turkish régime suddenly occur at Constantinople? Both Governments profess a desire to do their utmost to uphold this régime and the measures for securing this might form the subject of "pourparlers" between them which would offer a reasonable probability that they would come to a satisfactory conclusion. If Russia and Austria-Hungary could come to an understanding with regard to the maintenance of the integrity of the Turkish dominions in Europe, an end would be put to a great extent to their suspicions of

each other, and standing on such an agreement Count Aehrenthal and M. Isvolsky might gradually approach in common other Balkan problems with a better likelihood of coming to terms with regard to them.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

MINUTE.

A rapprochement is certainly to be desired, and it is not impossible that M. Isvolsky may respond; we cannot intervene.

L. M.
C. H.
E. G.

No. 95.

Sir C. Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Foreign Office, January 18, 1910.

I quite agree with you in what you write as to half-hearted friendships or understandings.⁽²⁾ The Government of India have, unfortunately, always been intensely suspicious of our agreement with Russia, and have not failed to thwart it during the course of the negotiations. They are still thwarting its results, which might be extremely beneficial, both to them and to us. We are, however, returning to the charge about the Persian railways, and I trust that we may in the end meet with some success. Curiously enough, I heard through the Editor of the "Standard" that the Emperor had a conversation the other day with Homiakow on the subject of a trans-Persian line, and expressed himself as very anxious for its construction, as likely to be of great benefit to Russian and Indian trade. I am quite certain that the Emperor and Isvolsky have no sinister ideas towards us in pressing for the construction of such a line, and there are plenty of ways in which we can safeguard our position.

As regards the advance to Persia, I have proposed to Sir Edward Grey that we should give the whole of our share at once, allowing the Russians to pay only the moiety of theirs, provided that the Persian Government agree without delay to the establishment of road-guards in the South, where our trade is practically at a complete standstill, owing to the prevailing insecurity on the Shiraz Road. I expect that Sir Edward will agree to this proposal, and I shall probably telegraph to you in that sense tomorrow, when I get his reply. I do not imagine that Isvolsky will make any objection, more especially as I do not see that it is necessary that any Persian money should be spent on the creation of the force of road-guards, provided that the Persian Government agree to the levy of a ten per cent surtax on imports and exports.

It is unfortunate that there is a divergence of views between Barclay and Poklewski as to the employment of Russian Officers as instructors to the gendarmerie and army. I gather from Barclay that Poklewski is inexorable on the subject, and does not realise that the Russians are very unpopular in Persia, and that the Persian Government will resist to the utmost the introduction of any more Russian Officers into the country. Barclay is in favour of Officers of some other foreign nationality being employed, and I think on the whole that he is right. It is not necessary that they should all be of one nationality.

The Russians do not appear to be in any hurry to move their troops from Kazvin, where there is really no necessity for them to remain any longer. It is extraordinary how difficult it is to make them move, when it comes to the question of withdrawing troops from a foreign country.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. I of 1910.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 101-2, No. 92.]

I hope that Isvolsky is now satisfied with our attitude, both as regards the Manchurian Railways and the Aigun line. The Americans have been pressing us hard during the last few days in connexion with the latter line; but we have resisted, and intend to do nothing until we hear from you what the Russian attitude and views are.

From what we hear, it seems not unlikely that there will be another upheaval in Turkey before very long; but it is predicted that it will not be of so serious a character as the revolution and counter-revolution of last year. In any case, affairs are not going particularly well there, and to my mind the danger lies in the fact that the Young Turks may provoke a conflict with Greece in order to divert attention from their failure in administration. The new Grand Vizier is an ardent nationalist, and I think we may expect trouble in connexion with Crete before very long.

Your advice to Isvolsky about Dillon's articles⁽³⁾ was very sound. It would be a great mistake to raise any further discussions on the events of last year, which should now be consigned to the limbo of oblivion.

The alarm expressed by the Retch at the prospect of an Anglo-Franco-German *entente* is sheer nonsense. An agreement between France and Germany is absolutely impossible, however good their manners towards each other may be, nor, so far as I can see, is any *entente* between England and Germany possible, so long as the German Government persist in maintaining that their naval law must be carried out to its full extent, as this would entail our building at least fifty Dreadnoughts. I think we may wait until that has been achieved before we trouble to come to terms with Germany. . . . (4)

Yours ever,

CHARLES HARDINGE.

(3) [For the article in the *Fortnightly Review*, v. *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, pp. 810-1, No. 872, *note* (2); and *cp. supra*, pp. 84-5, No. 75, and *note* (1); p. 87, No. 78, *encl.*, also *infra*, p. 110, No. 98.]

(4) [For the remaining paragraphs of this letter, v. *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. VI, p. 425. No. 320.]

CHAPTER LXXII.

THE AUSTRO-RUSSIAN RAPPROCHEMENT, JANUARY-JUNE, 1910.

No. 96.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/978.
3350/3326/10/38.
(No. 36.)
Sir,

*St. Petersburg, D. January 19, 1910.
R. January 31, 1910.*

Monsieur de Wesselitsky, the correspondent of the "Novoe Vremya" in London, called on me this morning. He said that he was here on a mission of peace and mediation. He had just come from Vienna, where he had had interviews with Count d'Aehrenthal,⁽¹⁾ and he had gathered that that statesman was desirous of placing the relations between Austria-Hungary and Russia on a better footing: and that he would be glad if Monsieur de Wesselitsky would be an intermediary in favour of that beneficent object. Count d'Aehrenthal had stated that Austria-Hungary did not intend to make any further advances in South Eastern Europe either now or in a distant future: and that the new *régime* in Turkey should be upheld and strengthened and that the *status quo* should be maintained. On these bases a common ground would be found for an understanding with Russia. Count d'Aehrenthal and others were at the same time uneasy as to the solidity of the new Turkish structure, and, I understood from Monsieur de Wesselitsky, would be glad to come to some arrangement with Russia as to the course to be pursued in the event of a collapse in Europe of the Turkish rule.

I told Monsieur de Wesselitsky that everyone would rejoice if the relations between the two Foreign Ministers were placed on a better footing, and that all desired the maintenance of the *status quo* in South Eastern Europe, and wished prosperity to the new Turkish *régime*. At the same time it seemed to me somewhat inconsistent, while asseverating the wish to preserve the Turkish Empire, to desire to discuss projects dependent on its downfall. I doubted if it would be wise at this moment to enter into any discussion of a hypothetical eventuality. Monsieur de Wesselitsky hoped that I would read a letter which he had written to the "Novoe Vremya," which gave a short summary of his conversation with Count d'Aehrenthal. He had obtained His Excellency's permission to inform the public of what had passed. I have been supplied with a summary of this letter, and I do not know if Count d'Aehrenthal would consider it as a satisfactory rendering of the conversation. Count d'Aehrenthal is reported to have said that a party existed in Russia outside of Government circles hostile to Austria-Hungary. The correspondent corrected this statement, and remarked that not only a party but all Russian public opinion was hostile to what it deems to be the policy of the Vienna Cabinet, and that such hostility could only be removed by a change in Austrian foreign policy. Count d'Aehrenthal further stated that the popular belief that Germany had influenced Austria in regard to the annexation of the two provinces or that Germany had any influence whatever, generally speaking, on Austria was false. He added that if any Power had influence on Austria it was Russia. Count d'Aehrenthal further expressed his belief that Austro-Russian relations would gradually improve but that it would

⁽¹⁾ [For the stages in the resumption of normal relations between Austria-Hungary and Russia v. *O.-U.A.*, II, pp. 653-808, Nos. 1947-2105, *Siebert*, Bk. II, Chapter 2, and *G.P.* XXVII, II, Chapter 215.]

take time. No further polemics would take place on the part of Austria either directly or indirectly; and there was no likelihood, immediate or remote, of any fresh movement by Austria in the Balkans. Count d'Aehrenthal had concluded his interview with a categorical statement that the Vienna Cabinet would consider the question of Balkan railways exclusively from an economic point of view.

I told Monsieur Iswolsky this afternoon that I had seen Monsieur de Wesselitsky, who apparently wished to act as mediator. His Excellency observed that Monsieur de Wesselitsky was an intelligent man, but inclined to exaggerate his part. It would be well if Austro-Russian relations were brought into a more satisfactory and normal course, but he did not think that this could be effected through the intermediary of the correspondent of the "Novoe Vremya." He recognised that the present attitude of the two Powers towards each other might have unfortunate consequences if serious questions were to arise, and it would be of advantage if the mutual suspicion could be removed.

Monsieur Iswolsky alluded to the mission of Monsieur Danef to Constantinople, which, according to the information which he had received, appeared to have had good results. The Turkish Ministers with whom Monsieur Danef had conversed were liberal in assurances that the Turkish Government wished to adopt a friendly and conciliatory policy towards the Bulgarians in Macedonia; and he presumed that Monsieur Danef attached weight to these assurances as he had left for Salonica, and the Vali had received instructions to give him a cordial reception. I asked what line Monsieur Danef intended to follow in Macedonia. His Excellency said that he knew no details; but Monsieur Tcharykow seemed to consider that the mission of Monsieur Danef had been quite successful.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 97.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Eduard Grey.

F.O. 371/825.

3090/2386/10/3.

(No. 11.) Confidential.

Sir,

Vienna, D. January 25, 1910.

R. January 27, 1910.

With reference to my telegram No. 6, secret, of the 21st instant,⁽¹⁾ reporting that Colonel Martchenko, the Russian Military Attaché here, appeared to be compromised in a case of espionage, I have the honour to furnish you with the following details of the case.

It appears that for some time past the police have kept their eyes upon certain persons who were suspected of being engaged in furnishing military secrets to the agent of a foreign Power. Some ten days ago, it is asserted, a detective was told off to catch the parties concerned "in flagrante delicto." According to the account which has so far appeared in the newspapers, the police official in question succeeded in arresting Colonel Martchenko and an individual named von Kretschmar, a clerk in a military bureau here. Colonel Martchenko, it is said, escaped arrest on proving that he was a member of a foreign Embassy, but it at once became known throughout Vienna that he was compromised in the case.

Colonel Martchenko's conduct since these revelations became public has been somewhat inexplicable, for instead of leaving Vienna without loss of time he has remained here now for over a week, although no serious attempt has been made on the part of the Russian Embassy to deny the truth of the charges which have been

(¹) [Not reproduced, as the tenour is sufficiently indicated above.]

levelled against the Russian Military Attaché. Count Aehrenthal, I believe, has advised the Russian Chargé d'Affaires to get Colonel Martchenko removed from Vienna with as little "éclat" as possible, and the Austro-Hungarian Government sincerely desire that this unfortunate event shall not give rise to a scandal which might injure the attempts which they are making for improving the relations between the Dual Monarchy and Russia. Nevertheless the delay shown by Colonel Martchenko in taking his departure causes general astonishment in Vienna, and it is looked upon as a want of tact on his part and as an abuse of the courtesy which has been shown by the Austro-Hungarian Government to the Russian Embassy here throughout this case.

I may add that the newspapers this morning announce that Colonel Martchenko had formed a regular "bureau" for the collection of secret information, and that during the late Servian crisis he had been supplied with many forged documents in return for money, amongst others the presumed text of the Military Conventions between Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, and between Austria-Hungary and Roumania.

It may be worth recalling here that during the Servian crisis Colonel Martchenko used frequently to come to me with alarmist news as to the intentions of Austria-Hungary with regard to the Balkan States. These alarmist reports were transmitted by Colonel Martchenko to the Russian Government, and I have no doubt that they contributed not a little to the hesitations and irresolution showed by M. Isvolsky at that time. Colonel Martchenko has not succeeded in gaining the good will of Viennese Society during the five years of his stay in this city, and I may add that I have not heard a single regret expressed at the prospect of his impending departure.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

MINUTES.

Such incidents are of frequent occurrence. When I was at St. Petersburg both the German and Austrian Mil[itar]y Attachés had to leave owing to their being compromised in cases of espionage. One of them was C[oun]t Aehrenthal's Mil[itar]y Attaché.

C. H.

The belief in espionage has created a laboratory for forging documents and not only Isvolsky but also Aehrenthal have been supplied with them and misled by them as the Friedjung trial showed.⁽²⁾

E. G.

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 95, No. 87, and note ⁽¹⁾]

No. 98.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1003.

5132/5019/10/44A.

(No. 61.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. January 30, 1910.

R. February 14, 1910.

I asked M. Iswolsky yesterday whether there was any truth in the reports which I had seen in the papers as to a "rapprochement" between Russia and Austria-Hungary. His Excellency said that he would tell me confidentially exactly how the matter stood.

Count Berchtold called on him recently and said that Count d'Aehrenthal regretted that a coolness existed between the two Cabinets, and that he was desirous

of smoothing over all personal differences which existed between himself and M. Iswolsky. Count d'Aehrenthal expressed his readiness, by any means which M. Iswolsky might suggest, to remove any apprehensions which might exist in the public mind in connection with the article in the "Fortnightly Review"⁽¹⁾ [for November 1909], and in regard to other publications. M. Iswolsky informed me that he had told Count Berchtold that he did not desire to revive any personal questions or polemics; it would be better to allow all such questions to slumber. Were a démenti or a rectification of the misstatements in the Fortnightly Review Article to be made, it would but resuscitate a controversy of a personal character which could be of no possible advantage to anyone. He wished to put entirely on one side all personal questions, as it was of far more importance that an improvement should be effected in the political relations between the two countries. He did not conceal from himself that the present attitude of the two Cabinets towards each other was most unfortunate, and indeed contained elements of danger should any event suddenly arise in South East Europe. It would hamper all other Powers if in serious questions affecting the Balkans Austria-Hungary and Russia were not on speaking terms—or, as he expressed it, "*si le fil entre Vienne et S[ain]t Pétersbourg était coupé.*" The situation in South East Europe was such that it was most desirable that the relations between Austria-Hungary and Russia should be replaced on a normal footing. If, therefore, Count d'Aehrenthal had any declaration to make as to the principles by which the policy of Austria-Hungary in the Balkans would in future be guided, he would be very happy to receive such a declaration and fully to consider it.

There the conversation with Count Berchtold, M. Iswolsky said, had ended; and he would now await any communication which Count d'Aehrenthal might think fit to make to him. He wished me, at the same time, to assure you that he did not intend to enter into any secret understandings or any arrangements à deux with Count d'Aehrenthal. Past experience had shown him how dangerous it was to have any discussions on such matters with Count d'Aehrenthal and indeed there now existed no common ground on which special arrangements between Austria and Russia could be based. If the Austrian Government made any declaration or communication it would have to be understood that it was to become the common property of all the Powers and not intended for the special benefit of Russia alone.

I thanked Monsieur Iswolsky for the information which he had given me, and remarked that in my opinion it was exceedingly wise on his part to abandon a personal controversy and finally to bury all questions of a personal nature. Everyone, I felt sure, would rejoice if normal relations between Austria-Hungary and Russia could be re-established. Monsieur Iswolsky said that he must wait to see what reply he would receive from Count d'Aehrenthal, and though he had deprecated a revival of the personal questions, he did not forget that he "had been very badly treated."

His Excellency added that the political questions which in the near future would possibly arise in South Eastern Europe would be of such importance as to overshadow any personal differences, and it was most desirable that the tension between Vienna and St. Petersburg should be relaxed as speedily as possible.

Monsieur Iswolsky has adopted a sensible attitude in this matter and it is satisfactory to know that, so far as he is concerned, there will be no recurrence of personal polemics in the public press. Monsieur Iswolsky, I could see, is still personally embittered against Count d'Aehrenthal and has a profound distrust of him but he will, doubtless, do his best to maintain correct and normal political relations with him.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [v. Gooch & Temperley, Vol V, pp. 810-1, No. 872. For Count Berchtold's reports v. O.-U.A., II, pp. 614-768. Nos. 1908-2064, *passim*. Reference to the article in the *Fortnightly Review* is made also *supra*, pp. 84-5, No. 75, and note ⁽¹⁾; p. 87. No. 78, *encl.*, p. 106, No. 95.]

MINUTES.

M. Izvolski has displayed not only moderation and good sense but a forgiving disposition and a sentiment of patriotism.

H. N.
L. M.

The dislike and distrust of C[oun]t Aehrenthal remain

C. H.
E. G.

No. 99.

Sir C. Greene to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/975.
4287/4287/10/87.
(No. 6.)
Sir,

*Bucharest, D. February 2, 1910.
R. February 7, 1910.*

The Prime Minister, who has been passing the last three weeks in Italy in order to complete his recovery from his wounds, returned to Bucharest on Saturday. On his way through Vienna M. Bratiano had an Audience of the Emperor Francis Joseph, and a long conversation with Count von Aehrenthal: he was also entertained at dinner at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

In the course of a visit which I had from M. Djuvara on the day before M. Bratiano's return, I asked His Excellency if he could tell me anything about the interview which the Prime Minister had had with Count von Aehrenthal, and if, as had been stated in the Press, the conversation had been in connection with the rumoured *rapprochement* between Austria and Russia. M. Djuvara replied that he had only had one telegram so far from the Prime Minister, but that he might tell me at once that the conversation between His Excellency and Count von Aehrenthal had turned upon the subject to which I had referred, and he added that he could himself corroborate the truth of the statements now appearing in the papers, from an official Report which he had received from the Roumanian Minister at Vienna, who had had an hour's conversation on the subject with the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

M. Djuvara said that his information was that a distinct feeling was perceptible both in Austria and in Russia that the friction between M. Iswolsky and Count von Aehrenthal had lasted much too long, and that it would be to the mutual advantage of both countries to let bye-gones be bye-gones. Especially, His Excellency said, was this the case in the present aspect of the Balkan situation, where it was in the interest of all parties, and not least of Roumania, to see some settled programme inaugurated. He believed that the idea was that the two Powers should arrive at some definite understanding in order to maintain the *status quo* in the Peninsula, and to discourage any hopes that might be harboured that there was anything to be gained from the perpetuation of the feud between these two Powers. M. Djuvara went on to say that the uncertain element, and the one which was disquieting everyone, from the greatest to the smallest of the Powers, was the outlook in Turkey. He could affirm this not only from his Report from Vienna, but from his conversations with all the foreign Representatives here. It was this uncertainty whether Turkey was destined to break up and become once more the bone of contention of others, or whether she was able to consolidate her regeneration, which baffled calculation and kept the Peninsula in a state of ferment.

Another uncertain factor was the attitude of Bulgaria. What with the strain of keeping up a large military establishment, and the disappointment at having let slip an opportunity at the time of the revolution at Constantinople, there were decided symptoms of unrest at Sofia. Bulgaria would, no doubt be satisfied if the Macedonian problem should develop along the same lines as that of Crete, and if, say by the gift

of some sort of autonomy, the Province should gravitate towards Bulgaria as Crete might have gravitated towards Greece, but things had not come to that pass yet, and Bulgaria must remember that if she sought to displace the present equilibrium in the Balkans, she would have to reckon with Roumania, and that any attempt at territorial expansion would introduce a "note of interrogation" in the relations between the two States.

In reporting the above remarks, I may add that it is hardly necessary to say that any *rapprochement* between Austria and Russia would nowhere be more welcomed than in Roumania, whose mere geographical position, wedged in, as she is, between these two great neighbours, places her in a particularly delicate situation. It is true that the relations of Roumania both with Russia and with Austria, apart from Hungary, are excellent, and King Charles strains every nerve to keep them so, but the certainty that Austria and Russia had adopted a common programme in the Balkans would, no doubt, relieve this strain, and make it easier for Roumania to pursue her traditional policy of "seconding the efforts of the Great Powers in the cause of Peace."

I have, &c.

CONYNGHAM GREENE.

No. 100.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/1003.

5183/5019/10/44A.

(No. 66.)

St. Petersburg, D. February 2, 1910.

R. February 14, 1910.

Sir,

In continuation of my despatch No. 61 of the 30th ultimo,⁽²⁾ I have the honour to report that M. Iswolsky informed me to-day that Count Berchtold had made a communication to him on behalf of Count d'Aehrenthal which was of a satisfactory nature, and which he thought would pave the way to normal relations being re-established between Austria-Hungary and Russia. He was cogitating over what kind of formula could be drafted, and whether it should be in the form of a "notice" or of an "Aide-Memoire" or embodied in an exchange of Notes. These were, however, minor details, and he would keep me informed of what passed. He reiterated that the personal question would not be referred to, and that no dual arrangement or understanding would be laid down. All that he wished to have recorded would be a statement of principles which would guide the policy of Austria-Hungary in the Balkans. He enquired if I had informed you of what he had communicated to me a few days ago. I said that I had sent you a fairly full summary by telegraph.⁽³⁾ He said that he had put the question, as from a telegram which he had received from Count Benckendorff, who had suggested to him to keep me informed, it would appear that you had not been enlightened. I observed that probably my telegram had arrived after His Excellency's conversation with you.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [A summary of this despatch was sent to Sir Edward Grey in Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 38 of February 2, D. 8 P.M., R. 9 P.M. (F.O. 371/978. 3864/3326/10/38.)]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 109-10, No. 98.]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced. Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 27, of January 29, D. 8 P.M., R. 9-45 P.M. (F.O. 371/978. 3326/3326/10/38), summarized the contents of his despatch No. 61 of January 30. *v. supra*, pp. 109-10, No. 98.]

No. 101.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/978.
 3974/3326/10/38.
 Tel. (No. 8.)

Vienna, February 3, 1910.
 D. 7·10 P.M.
 R. 8 P.M.

Your telegram No. 2.⁽¹⁾

I enquired of Aehrenthal today whether he could give me any information with regard to the so-called rapprochement between Austria and Russia. He replied that wonders were not to be expected, but he was glad to record the fact that M. Isvolsky showed a disposition to enter into conversation with him. He added that this was a marked change from the spirit which inspired the Czar's visit to Racconigi.

On my observing that the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs would probably, after the events of last year, expect a clear intimation on the part of Austria as to her future policy in the Balkans, his Excellency replied that that policy was well known and had not changed. It was the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Balkans and the integrity of the Ottoman dominions.

I added that it seemed to me desirable that a declaration to that effect should now be made to the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It was the telegram (repeated to Vienna) sent to acknowledge Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 27 of January 29. *v. supra*, immediately preceding document, and note ⁽³⁾.]

No. 102.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/978.
 3864/3326/10/38.
 Tel. (No. 60.)

Foreign Office, February 3, 1910.

I welcome the prospect of distrust between Russia and Austria being replaced by relations of confidence and goodwill.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Vienna (No. 4). It was the reply to Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 38 of February 2, *v. supra*, p. 112, No. 100, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

No. 103.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/826.
 4283/4127/10/3.
 (No. 16.)
 Sir,

Vienna, D. February 4, 1910.
 R. February 7, 1910.

The Austro-Hungarian press continues to occupy itself with the so-called "rapprochement" between Austria-Hungary and Russia, and although the idea of such a "rapprochement" is welcomed in Government circles here, there are signs that it does not quite meet with the approval of the out and out pro-German organs of the Austrian press. I do not mean that these absolutely deprecate such a "rapprochement" but they either show a certain scepticism with regard to the probability of its coming to anything serious, or they express a dislike to its being brought about without the intermediary assistance of Germany, using the argument that the vital

point for Austria-Hungary and Germany is to remember that they should hold fast together in dealing with all international questions of any magnitude.

Yesterday I went to see Count Aehrenthal and I asked him whether he had any information to give me with regard to the so much talked of "rapprochement" with Russia. He replied that there was not much to be said on the subject: it was a mistake to suppose that the political situation could be changed by a "coup de théâtre"; in the month of December last he had received M. Wesselitzky, the London correspondent of the "Nowoe Wremja,"⁽¹⁾ the reputed anti-Austrian journalist, and he had spoken to him very freely and without reserve. He had even authorized him to publish the substance of the interview as he thought it might have a pacifying effect upon Russian public opinion. M. Wesselitzky, on arriving at St. Petersburg, had apparently seen M. Isvolsky and he seems to have been able to somewhat reassure that Russian statesman as to the straightforwardness of Austro-Hungarian policy in the Balkans. The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at St. Petersburg, I understood Count Aehrenthal to say, had followed M. Wesselitzky up and a conversation had taken place between the Ambassador and M. Isvolsky. For the moment the situation was therefore as follows: M. Isvolsky no longer turned his back upon Austria-Hungary; he was looking towards Vienna and a kind of preliminary conversation had taken place between the foreign Ministers of the two Empires; contact has been restored between St. Petersburg and Vienna and Count Aehrenthal seems to be satisfied with this for the moment.

Count Aehrenthal then told me that in his opinion the force of circumstances would sooner or later inevitably bring Russia and Austria-Hungary together in dealing with Balkan matters; the interest of the two countries seemed to him to require a joint understanding should events occur which might demand a protection of their common interests in the Near East. I asked His Excellency whether he would follow up the conversation with St. Petersburg; he replied that he did not quite know what M. Isvolsky might further want of him. I hinted that it seemed to me probable that after the crisis caused by the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina M. Isvolsky would expect to receive some definite statement with regard to the future policy of Austria-Hungary in the Balkans. Count Aehrenthal replied that the late crisis had in no way altered the policy of Austria-Hungary in the Near East, and he seemed to think that there was no need for himself to make a formal declaration on a subject about which there could be no reasonable doubt.

Since I had this conversation with Count Aehrenthal I have seen M. Crozier, the French Ambassador, and I have asked him to impress upon Count Aehrenthal the necessity of the latter being more explicit at St. Petersburg on the subject of Austro-Hungarian Balkan policy if he wishes the present tentative "rapprochement" between the two countries to come to anything. M. Crozier promised me that he would do so but I gather from what he said that M. Louis, the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg, is rather inclined to prevent such a "rapprochement" from taking place, perhaps because he thinks that should Russia's anxieties as to the Balkans be removed, she might be inclined to return again to the pursuit of an adventurous policy in the Far East, and this would not be in accord with French interests.

The most important point just now is to try and ascertain what are the views held by Count Aehrenthal and by other leading persons here with regard to the future policy of Austria-Hungary in the Balkans. I have spoken with many people on this subject and the conclusions I come to are as follows:—Austria-Hungary sincerely desires the maintenance of peace in the Balkan Peninsula and the maintenance there of the "status quo." For Count Aehrenthal the base on which the "status quo" rests is the continuance of the stability and of the integrity of the Turkish Empire; he will therefore do all in his power to uphold the Ottoman Empire but should a catastrophe unfortunately occur at Constantinople then Count Aehrenthal is of opinion, as he has often said to me, that the settlement of the new order of things in the

(1) [*cp. supra*, pp. 107–8, No. 96.]

Balkans must be left in the hands of the Great Powers acting together. M. Bratiano was in Vienna a few days ago and Count Aehrenthal yesterday informed me that he had repeated to the Roumanian Prime Minister what he had told him in the summer, namely that the Great Powers could not admit that Bulgaria and Roumania should between themselves settle the fate of Macedonia, and that he warned him against the dangers which Roumania would incur if she linked her interests with those of Bulgaria and the latter received a severe military check from Turkey.

I have good reasons for believing that the following general ideas prevail in Government circles here as to what should be done to protect Austro-Hungarian interests in the event of a breaking up of the Turkish Empire in Europe:—Austria-Hungary will never admit that the Sanjak Novibazar shall fall into the hands of Servia; Austria-Hungary has no serious desire to obtain possession of Albania as she knows that she can only do this after a conflict with Italy, and she would accept as a solution any sort of autonomous or semi-independent Government for that Turkish province. As regards Bulgaria Austria-Hungary would resign herself to seeing her obtain an increase of her territory, provided that that took place more or less in the direction of Constantinople and away from Salonica. I do not believe that Austro-Hungarian public opinion would ever admit that Salonica should become Bulgarian. In the event of a breaking up of the Turkish Empire Salonica must therefore either become a free port or it must be annexed to Greece; the latter course, I believe, would not be absolutely opposed by Austria-Hungary, provided sufficient guarantees were obtained for the security of her commercial interests in that portion of the Near East.

An impression seems to be prevalent here that M. Isvolsky will demand, if the "rapprochement" between Austria-Hungary and Russia is to become something more than a mere phantom, that Count Aehrenthal shall give assurances that he will not interfere with the free development of the Balkan States. What does M. Isvolsky mean by "free development"? If it is merely a fine sounding phrase which has no special meaning in it, Count Aehrenthal will probably not object to give the assurances he is asked for, but if M. Isvolsky means by "free development" free aggrandizement, that is an entirely different matter, and Count Aehrenthal may be expected to reply that a change in the "status quo" in the Balkans is an European question and not one which can be settled between Austria-Hungary and Russia alone.

In the conversation which I had with Count Aehrenthal yesterday, His Excellency alluded to M. Isvolsky's idea of a Confederation of the Balkan States.⁽²⁾ Count Aehrenthal shrugged his shoulders as he used the word "confederation," and he asked me what would have been said if Austria-Hungary had put forward such an idea. According to him, the confederation scheme was not meant to be taken seriously but it might do much mischief and raise false hopes in various quarters. The scheme was somewhat ostentatiously put forward as a pacifying one, but Count Aehrenthal declared that if pushed to a head it would mean the break up of the Balkan States into two camps and thereby sow the seeds for friction and conflicts in the Near East.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

MINUTE.

If M. Isvolsky is wise, he will not ask for assurances as to Austria's attitude in too great detail. Otherwise the rapprochement will end in another quarrel and I hope that Sir F. Cartwright will not play too active a part.

L. M.
C. H.
E. G.

⁽²⁾ [For earlier references to M. Isvolski's plan, *v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, p. 543, No. 493; p. 810, No. 871.]

No. 104.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/842.

5080/1/10/10.

(No. 68.)

Sir,

*St. Petersburg, D. February 4, 1910.**R. February 14, 1910.*

Monsieur Stolypin was dining with me last night, and during a few minutes conversation which I had with him he at once broached the question of the Chinchow-Aigun railway. He remarked that the construction of the line would seriously affect the economic and strategic interests of Russia, and that it required the most careful consideration on the part of the Russian Government. It would have been a sufficiently serious matter if it had been projected merely as far as Tsitsihar, but as it was to run up to Aigun its importance was greatly increased. The Russian Government would have to speak seriously to the Chinese Government. He was, moreover, troubled by the participation of British financiers in the project and the support which they might receive from His Majesty's Government. He was much afraid that any action on our part in favour of the scheme would injure our *entente* with Russia, and already some people had pointed out to him that Russia's "new friends" were acting in no benevolent spirit towards Russian interests. It should not be forgotten that the Anglo-Russian understanding was of very recent origin and that there were many hostile to it.

I told His Excellency that no one was more alive than myself to the risk of exposing our understanding to any shocks, but that in the matter of the Aigun line my Government were remaining perfectly passive and were desirous of taking the interests and wishes of Russia into the fullest consideration. I said that you had recently had a conversation with Count Benckendorff on the subject and that I expected to receive within the course of a day or two a private communication from you. He should be quite assured that my Government were most desirous that the close harmony between the two Governments should continue to prevail in all questions affecting the interests of both countries. His Excellency ejaculated "Ah, that is well."

I propose to see Monsieur Stolypin shortly, and I will then go into more details than was possible in a hasty conversation with numerous bystanders.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTES.

The Russians are running this subject to death. There was from the beginning so little question of our supporting anyone or anything against the wishes of Russia in this district that it did not occur to anyone that the matter was far enough advanced to make it worth while considering Russia at all, though as will be seen from the minutes on previous papers the fact that Russia had interests in these regions was by no means lost sight of.

M[ONKSWELL].

Anyhow we know that M. Isvolsky is now quite satisfied with our attitude.

B. A.

14/2/10.

We had the substance of this by telegraph.

F. A. C.

15/2.

C. H.

E. G.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/1003.

4682/4682/10/44A.

(No. 19.) Confidential.

Sir,

Vienna, D. February 6, 1910.

R. February 9, 1910.

I have the honour to report that Dr. Milovanowitch, the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs, who has come to Vienna for a few days, came to see me yesterday morning, and that on the previous day he had spent nearly an hour and a-half with Count Aehrenthal. Dr. Milovanowitch declared to me that he had come away very satisfied from his long interview with the Austro-Hungarian Minister, and that, although the Hungarian crisis might for a time delay the putting into force of any new commercial arrangement which might be arrived at with the Dual Monarchy, still he felt that Count Aehrenthal was disposed to be most conciliatory towards Servia, and that there was a prospect of a good understanding being reached before long between his country and Austria-Hungary.

Dr. Milovanowitch gave me to understand that the old division of political parties in Servia into two camps, namely the pro-Russian and the pro-Austrian ones, was gradually giving way to a better realization of the harm done by such a division. He added that the Servian peasantry was beginning to understand that in future it must pay more attention to its own interests and less to those of ambitious and unscrupulous politicians. Dr. Milovanowitch seemed to realize that friction with Austria-Hungary was harmful to Servia and that her economic interests demanded that she should have a good understanding with the Dual Monarchy.

As regards the present political outlook in the Balkans, Dr. Milovanowitch did not seem to be very sanguine as to the stability of things there. Servia, he said, would do nothing to upset the "status quo," but it was her duty like that of every other Balkan State to be on the watch and to be prepared for possible eventualities. The present "status quo" was perhaps not an ideal state of things for the inhabitants of that part of the world, in fact it was looked upon by all of them as a transition state of things and not as a permanent solution of a difficult problem. The "status quo" might last a long time—even perhaps the length of a generation—but for Dr. Milovanowitch it did not seem to contain in itself the germs of permanency. Dr. Milovanowitch said that the "status quo" rested on an uncertain basis—indeed on a very uncertain one—namely the continuance for any length of time of the integrity of the Ottoman dominions in Europe. A blow at the integrity of Turkey might be dealt at any moment; it might come from Greece, it might come from Bulgaria; it was therefore the duty of Servia to be prepared for all emergencies but she would do nothing to hurry on a crisis in the Near East. Dr. Milovanowitch here quoted to me an oriental proverb which says, "do not push at a drunken man for if you leave him alone he will fall by himself, whereas if you push him it may brace him up to give you a blow in the eye." Dr. Milovanowitch declared to me that Servia would follow the advice contained in this proverb and remain quiet as regards Turkey, running no risks but waiting patiently until internal disorders brought the Ottoman Empire down. This led the Servian Minister to explain to me his views with regard to the new "régime" in Turkey. He evidently does not believe in the durability of its tenure of office. For him that "régime" is an eccentricity imported from Europe and grafted on the surface of the complicated Ottoman national life; it is not due to a reviving spirit which has sprung from the inner Turkish life and therefore has sunk no roots into the vital parts of the Turkish race. For Dr. Milovanowitch the new Turkish "régime" was sooner or later doomed to failure for it did not seem to possess the one quality which might save it: administrative capacity. He assured me that the administration of the Ottoman dominions was at present in a state of chaos; the

(1) [Copies of this despatch were sent to the King and the Prince of Wales.]

oldfashioned bureaucrats had been sent about their business and they had been replaced by Young Turks who talked about "les droits de l'homme" and who had no practical experience how to govern the mixed races which formed the population of most of the provinces of the Turkish Empire. Dr. Milovanowitch observed that there was only one source of vitality still left in the Ottoman dominions, and that lay in the old Turks who were held together by faith in their religion and who would never admit that the Christian races were on a level with themselves. The Young Turk ideal that all the races who live on Turkish soil can be welded together into one nation by a sense of patriotism is a dream. Dr. Milovanowitch said to me that the term "Turk," if it was to have any significance, must always mean a Mahometan Turk, and the day it ceased to do so Turkey would likewise cease to exist.

As regards the "rapprochement" between Austria-Hungary and Russia, Dr. Milovanowitch said to me that he saw no harm in it. On the contrary, it might in some respects be good as it would diminish the possibility of Russian and Austro-Hungarian influences dividing the Balkan States into different spheres, but he hoped that the "entente" would not mean an "entente" for interference in Balkan affairs. As far as I could understand Dr. Milovanowitch's point of view, he hopes that Russia and Austria-Hungary and other European Powers will leave the Balkan States to fight out amongst themselves the re-arrangement of the Near East in the event of a collapse of the Ottoman Empire. On my enquiring of Dr. Milovanowitch how Servia at present stood with regard to Bulgaria, he replied that there was a reasonable possibility of the two countries coming to an amicable understanding with regard to their interests in Macedonia, and he again talked to me as he did at Marienbad (see my despatch No. 134 of August 17th last)⁽²⁾ of making Salonica, Constantinople and Gallipoli free ports in the event of their ceasing to be Turkish territory.

Finally Dr. Milovanowitch alluded to the idea of bringing about a Balkan Confederation.⁽³⁾ He said that it was an idea which might cause much mischief but could do little good for, if I understood him right, it was in his opinion no use talking about a confederation until things had settled down upon a more solid basis than at present exists in the Near East, and until the rival ambitions of the various States had been fairly satisfied.

I may add that in an interview which Dr. Milovanowitch has had with a reporter of the "Zeit" newspaper he is said to have declared that he had no intentions for the moment of visiting St. Petersburg but that if he did so later on his journey would have no definite political significance and would merely be undertaken for the purpose of obtaining general information.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

MINUTE.

With the exception of the second paragraph, there is little new beyond what we already know about Servian views as to the future of Turkey.

A. P

February 12, 1910.

R. P. M.

L. M.

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced, as its tenour is sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 371/779. 31665/31664/09/44A.)]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 115, No. 103.]

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/826.
4736/4127/10/3.

(No. 20.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. February 7, 1910.

R. February 10, 1910.

With reference to my despatch No. 16 of the 4th inst[ant],⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to report that the following official communication appeared in all the newspapers of the 5th inst[ant] with regard to the rapprochement between Austria-Hungary and Russia. The following is the text of the communication as it appears in the "Correspondance Politique":—

"On nous mande de S[ain]t-Petersbourg:—Depuis qu'on a signalé pour la première fois dans l'opinion publique que la tournure favorable des relations de la Russie et de l'Autriche-Hongrie constituait une éventualité qui pourrait se réaliser dans un temps qui n'est pas éloigné, il se manifeste en général un intérêt des plus prononcés pour la dite question, ce qui fait reconnaître l'importance que l'on attache de toutes parts au renouement des liens qui unissaient auparavant les deux puissances dans leur politique balkanique. Cependant certaines conjectures tirées au sujet des conditions dans lesquelles les rapports entre Vienne et S[ain]t-Petersbourg pourraient revêtir un caractère cordial anticipent par trop précipitamment sur l'état réel de cette question qui n'avance naturellement que très lentement. Il y a un fait à enregistrer, c'est que l'on est disposé de part et d'autre à se tendre la main en vue d'un rapprochement, et cet état d'esprit marque à lui seul un relâchement de la tension qui régnait jusqu'ici, et permet que les deux puissances entrent en rapports à l'effet de se mettre d'accord pour la réalisation de cette idée. La communication de détails à ce même sujet est interdite par la réserve particulière que réclame l'étude des questions délicates de cette nature. Il est opportun de signaler l'inexactitude des rapports présentant certaines déclarations de la part de l'une des deux chancelleries intéressées comme la condition préalable d'une détente entre Saint-Petersbourg et Vienne et de la réussite d'un compromis entre ces deux capitales. Il suffit d'examiner quelque peu cette question pour se rendre compte d'une chose, c'est que l'on peut seulement arriver à rétablir une communion d'idées des deux puissances à l'endroit de la politique balkanique et ramener la sincérité dont étaient auparavant empreintes les relations des deux pays, en se basant sur des explications et sur des assurances de nature identique données de part et d'autre."

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 113-5, No. 103.]

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, February 9, 1910.

Many thanks for your letter of the 27th ultimo.⁽²⁾ I read it to Iswolsky, and he asked if I could give him a summary of it in writing. I saw no objection to this, on condition that he treated it as private and confidential, and I asked him to let Stolypine see it, as the latter had spoken to me on the subject. Your letter, and the

(¹) [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

(²) [This letter dealt exclusively with the Chinchow-Aigun railway (F.O. 371/842. 4061/1/10/10).]

instructions which you sent to Jordan, have greatly pleased Iswolsky, and he spoke to Louis in praise of the straightforwardness of your attitude towards him and the loyalty of your policy. We may therefore consider the uneasiness which Iswolsky at one time felt in regard to our connexion with the active pushing American policy as being quite removed. I consider that our entente, so long as we have Iswolsky, and I should add Sazonow, at the Foreign Office is safe, and also so long as the Emperor supports it. These with Stolypine are our main supporters; but it would be unwise to disregard the fact that there is a considerable and influential circle near the Court and in the higher bureaucracy and army who are by no means cordial towards an understanding with us. You will think me tiresome so continually reiterating the above, but we must keep always the fact steadily in view. Germany is always active here: and her Ambassador, Pourtalès, has recently become prominent by speeches and interviews. I have written officially on this new departure on the part of my colleague. He has not been particularly fortunate in his *début* in this new part, and the "Novoe Vremya" and some of my friends in society have been making merry over his efforts. Pourtalès himself can do neither much harm or much good—it is the Naval Plenipotentiary von Hintze who is the real protagonist.

Not much has been written in the local papers as to our elections, though great interest was taken in them. In the circles among whom I move and have my being there were undoubtedly fears lest our extreme sections would win the day, and that our left wings would return considerably reinforced, with a programme of far-reaching changes. If this had been the case, there would have been much disappointment and uneasiness lest encouragement would thereby be given to the extreme elements in this country. England is regarded as the exemplar of sober, moderate, and sane progress, and it would have caused a shock to her well-wishers and admirers here if she had started off on a headlong course of breaking abruptly with all her traditions and her past. Now that it seems that the new House, as a whole, will be composed of moderate men, and that the democracy has not swung round to the extreme wings, there is a feeling of relief and a renewed confidence in the good sense of the British electorate. I doubt if many had much knowledge of the details of the Budget, and they did not concern themselves with that; but several with whom I have spoken look a little doubtfully as to the effects which Tariff Reform would produce on Russian trade. Witte with whom I had a long talk the other evening approved of the principles of the Budget, but he knows little of English affairs and said that he would not apply the above principles in this country. I am glad to think that I have you still as a chief. I should have been extremely sorry if our official relations had ceased.

Yours sincerely,

A. NICOLSON.

No. 108.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir C. Hardinge.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Hardinge,

St. Petersburg, February 9, 1910.

I am very much obliged to you for your letter of the 1st,⁽²⁾ and for the exceedingly interesting documents which you enclosed. The documents are instruc-

⁽¹⁾ [Hardinge MSS., Vol. II of 1910.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. The letter is in Carnock MSS., Vol. I of 1910, and also in Hardinge MSS., Vol. III of 1910. It refers to a variety of subjects. The last paragraph deals with the negotiations between Great Britain and Germany initiated by Horr von Bethunann Hollweg (*cp. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. VI, pp. 283-324, Chapter XLV), and states that there was division in the Cabinet on the question of fleet building. It also states that "what the Germans do not understand is that an agreement, to be of any value whatsoever, must receive the assent not only of the Government in power but also of the Opposition." Certain enclosures are mentioned at the end of the letter, but Sir C. Hardinge asked that they should be destroyed, and their destruction appears to have been accomplished.]

tive as showing very clearly the real objects in view, which were to break up our understandings with France and Russia, while giving free hand to Germany to assume the hegemony in Europe. It is strange that Germany could have imagined that we should be so naive and so forgetful of our interests as to acquiesce in such an arrangement. She will probably now return to an endeavour to loosen France and Russia from us. I can only deal with this country, and if Germany is skilful and patient (and fortunately she is rarely either) we shall require all our efforts to maintain Russia on her present footing with us. I consider it to be of the highest importance that we should not weaken in any way the relations existing at present. If we assume, and personally I think that we should assume, that Germany has a definite aim in view towards which she steadily works, and that that aim is to obtain a predominant and decisive voice in all questions in which European Powers and England are concerned or interested, it is patent that, if this aim were achieved, we should all be subservient to Berlin, and practically compelled to submit to her dictation. We are the only Power who can resist the achievement of that aim, as matters at present stand. Germany will endeavour to isolate us and to possess such a fleet which, even alone and unaided, would be able to emphasise her wishes with considerable force. Of course she does not wish to go to war with us. No one but a lunatic could wish for such a calamity; but I would not venture to assert that, when she considers the moment favourable, she would not be prepared to go to war if we were without friends and were still recalcitrant to her demands. This country generally speaking has not made up its mind as to its future foreign policy. I do not think that when we are taking a broad view, looking it possible some distance ahead, we should pay much attention, or attach undue importance, to passing phases of discontent with this or that country. At present there is considerable dissatisfaction with Germany, and mistrust and dislike of Austria. The latter feelings may linger for some time in the minds of many here, but in the main problem Austria is not the predominant factor. The present ill-temper with Germany is, to put it plainly, greatly discounted by fear of Germany; and Germany has many and powerful friends here, not to speak of propinquity, old traditional relations, etc., etc. It would be a foolish, and indeed an impossible, task to endeavour to persuade Russia to range herself ostentatiously on our side. This, naturally, does not enter into our desires or intentions; and the utmost that we can, and should, hope to do is to prevent Russia from being drawn too much into the orbit of Germany, or to be willing to be guided entirely by German advice. To realise even this much will demand constant attention and care, and we must endeavour to maintain a hearty co-operation with Russia within the scope of our Convention, and give no cause to her to regret that she concluded that instrument. If we can assist her in Far Eastern questions, so far as we properly can, so much the better. In both Mid and Far East we should do our best to further the interests of Russia so far as they do not clash with our own, and above all show confidence in her and not give cause for any suspicion that we mistrust her. Our opponents here are frequently contending that we interpret the Convention to our advantage, which is of course not the fact; but they are on the watch to seize any occasion which may indicate that we do not give sufficient consideration to Russian interests. If we continue to work the Convention as we have hitherto done, and are conciliatory as to the questions, railway and other, in Persia in which Russia is interested, all should go well. There are many other methods of bringing the two countries together, in commercial and financial directions, but it would lead me too far were I to enter into them. I fully anticipate renewed German activity here. Already there are some precursory signs of it, and I trust that no incidents will arise which may discourage our friends in this country. There is much that can be done towards promoting a better understanding, and there is also much that should be avoided if such an understanding as at present exists is to be maintained. I hope that we shall have a strong naval programme. If doubts became prevalent here that our supremacy on our own element were in serious danger, our value as friends would rapidly depreciate. If a conflict with Germany is to occur some day, and I do not see that it is "criminal"

to consider it as being within the limits of possibility, we should be fortunate if we can feel that Russia will be strictly neutral. Were she ill-disposed towards us she could, without becoming a belligerent, (and with our Japanese alliance she would hesitate to go so far) create great difficulties to us in the East. It is essential to keep Russia in a friendly atmosphere, as it is equally in the interests of Germany to sow discord between us. Iswolsky and perhaps a few others appreciate the value of international equilibrium among the European Powers, but I doubt if the bulk of opinion does here. The majority are not influenced by such considerations. I will weary you if I continue with these reflections, and so will cease. . . .⁽³⁾

Y[ou]rs ever,
A. NICOLSON.

⁽³⁾ [The rest of this letter refers to the proposed Anglo-Russian loan to Persia, and M. Iswolski's relations with Count von Aehrenthal.]

No. 109.

Sir B. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/982.
6021/6021/10/39.
(No. 13.)

*Belgrade, D. February 15, 1910.
R. February 21, 1910.*

Sir,

I had an interview this morning with Monsieur Milovanovitch at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for the first time since his return from Berlin about a week ago, though I had seen him several times in society during the interval.

His Excellency told me that he had seen Herr von Schoen and Sir Edward Goschen in Berlin, and had also had a conversation with Sir Fairfax Cartwright in Vienna, where he had of course visited Count von Aehrenthal. He did not give me much information as to what had passed at these interviews, but I gathered that the question of the return to normal relations between Russia and Austria-Hungary had been touched upon in some of them.

In this connection Monsieur Milovanovitch expressed the opinion that it would be of the greatest advantage for the peace of Europe if Austria-Hungary could be brought into line with the other Powers in regard to Balkan affairs, and induced to adhere to a programme similar to that adopted by Russia and Italy at the Racconigi meeting.⁽¹⁾ Some immediate improvement in the relations between Vienna and St. Petersburg seemed imperative, as since the annexation crisis the Russian Ambassador in Vienna had hardly had any personal communication with Count von Aehrenthal, and if difficulties were again to arise in the Near East it would be necessary for the two Governments to be able to exchange views freely.

His Excellency told me that about a fortnight hence he proposed to go to Constantinople in order to get into touch with the new Grand Vizier on all matters of common interest, and to dispel finally the suspicions of Servian intentions which had been aroused there. On the return journey he proposed to stop at Sofia for a couple of days to see the leading Bulgarian Statesmen.

In the course of conversation Monsieur Milovanovitch threw out a suggestion to the following effect: The Danube Adriatic Railway scheme was hanging fire in consequence of financial difficulties. Would it not be possible for the Powers favourable to this scheme to make it a condition of their assent to the proposed further increase in Turkish import duties, that the Turkish Government should give some financial support to it, either in the form of a moderate kilometric guarantee or by direct participation. It seemed unreasonable that Turkey should make all sorts of

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 79, No. 70. note ⁽¹⁾.]

conditions as to the line which the railway should follow and the port at which it should end, while taking no part in the financial burdens which it entailed, especially as the line would be of considerable strategic advantage to the Turkish Government, and they were morally bound to do what they could to open up to civilisation districts which at present were in a state of anarchy.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

MINUTES.

When Sir B. Whitehead receives in print a copy of No. 5148⁽²⁾ he will see that there is not much prospect of the Turks agreeing to the desires of M. Milovanovitch as explained in the last paragraph.

We need not notice the last paragraph.

A. P.

March 2, 1910.

L. M.

C. H.

E. G.

(²) [*v Ed note immediately following.*]

[*ED. NOTE*—Sir Gerard Lowther, writing from Constantinople on February 5 (despatch No. 66), reported that, as the Turkish Government were absolutely opposed to granting kilometric guarantees even for lines that would be of great service to them, it was highly improbable that they would give any for a railway which would profit Servia greatly, but themselves hardly at all. (F.O. 371/1002. 5148/3880/10/44)]

No. 110.

Sir C. Greene to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/975.

6044/6044/10/37.

(No. 8.) Confidential.

Sir,

Bucharest, D. February 15, 1910.

R. February 21, 1910.

I had a visit a few days ago from the Prime Minister, who had just returned from his sojourn in Italy.

M. Bratiano said that, while in Rome, he had had two or three conversations with the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and had found that there was a complete agreement in their views on all the main issues of the Balkan question. Both Countries desired the maintenance of peace, and deprecated anything which could disturb the present equilibrium. Parenthetically His Excellency remarked that he had been much struck by the frankly avowed determination of Italian Statesmen to adhere, in all eventualities, to their attachment to England.

When in Vienna on the homeward journey, M. Bratiano had been received both by the Emperor Francis Joseph and by Count von Aehrenthal. The Emperor had, His Excellency said, made no secret of his desire to improve the relations of Austria with Russia, and of his readiness to work towards this end. Count von Aehrenthal had also spoken in the same strain, and it was evident that there was a desire at any rate, if nothing more, for better relations between the two countries. M. Bratiano did not give me to understand that a definite programme had been formulated as yet, but that the idea underlying a *rapprochement* would be a policy of strict adherence to the *status quo*. Count von Aehrenthal seemed, he said, to be apprehensive that danger might arise from an understanding between Bulgaria and Servia, and thought that the best way to ensure peace in the Balkans would be to make the smaller Countries recognise that they need not build their hopes on the misunderstandings of their neighbours.

I reminded M. Bratiano of the conversation which he had had with Count von Aehrenthal just six months ago, and asked His Excellency if he understood that Austria's policy would continue to be directed on the lines then formulated. His Excellency would recollect, I said, that on the occasion in question Count von Aehrenthal had assured him that, while no possible contingency in the Balkans would be considered by him a pretext or reason for military intervention, this did not mean that he intended to abandon the traditional Austrian policy of pushing down towards Salonica. He was going to do all in his power to further this object, only it would henceforth be by peaceful penetration and economic development, and not by force. (Mr. Gregory No. 45 Confidential of September 17 1909.)⁽¹⁾ M. Bratiano replied that he was convinced that Count von Aehrenthal's policy did not then, and would not now, include the idea of any territorial expansion, but that it, no doubt, still contemplated the extension of Austria's economic interests in the Peninsula. He added that he felt sure that Germany had been kept *au courant* with the new phase of the situation.

In connection with the last remark, I may say that I was informed the other day in confidence by one of my Colleagues that M. de Kiderlen, who has just returned from long leave in Germany, was charged by the Imperial Chancellor, while in Berlin, with a message for Count von Aehrenthal in furtherance of the Austro-Russian *rapprochement*, and that, in passing through Vienna on his way back here, "he had acquitted himself of his task." My Colleague added that M. de Kiderlen, whom he knows very intimately, had not told him anything about this mission, but that he himself was inclined to think that it was Germany who was pushing Austria into the path of reconciliation.

I have, &c.

CONYNNGHAM GREENE.

MINUTES.

The end of the second paragraph is interesting.

As to the last sentence of the despatch, it is hardly confirmed by our recent information.

A. P.

March 2nd, 1910.

R. P. M.

L. M.

The attachment of Italian statesmen to this country does not mean that they would side with us, in the event of a war or even in a negotiation, unless it suited their interests to do so and unless they thought that we were the winning side, and this is quite natural. If strong popular feeling were on our side, things might be different and the hand of the Gov[ernment] forced, but that is unlikely.

The mere fact that they are actuated by so friendly a feeling towards us is however to the good.

L. M.

C. H.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 371/724. 35413/35413/09/87.)]

No. 111.

Sir C. Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson:—

Foreign Office, February 15, 1910.

I quite agree with the general views contained in your letter to me of the 9th instant as regards our relations with Russia.⁽²⁾ We fully realize that, at the

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. I of 1910.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 120-2, No. 108.]

present moment, Russian foreign policy is in an undeveloped condition, the only decisive fact being Russia's alliance with France. Our *entente* with Russia is one that requires good-will on both sides to render it successful and, although I quite recognize that there has been good-will on the Russian side as regards affairs in Afghanistan, I do not admit for a moment that the Russians have any cause to complain of a want of good-will on our side or, what is more, any reason for considering that we have failed in the loyal observance of our obligations. Although I see that you do not like our having used the word "sympathy" in our communication to the Persians made by Barclay, still the Russians have more than once declared to us their intention of withdrawing their troops, and they know perfectly well that our whole attitude towards them in Persia depends on the eventual withdrawal of those troops, whose permanent presence there would be contrary to their obligations towards us as defined by the *entente*. I do not therefore think that we have laid ourselves open to reproach.

We have, I know, to be careful in our relations with Russia but, if we co-operate with her in Persia, it is very necessary that the co-operation should be real and, as you will see from Barclay's telegrams, the recent attitude of the Russians towards the Persian Government has been one of causing them active embarrassment by withholding the loan, by maintaining their troops, by straining their interpretation of the rights of protection, and by their refusal to extradite Rahim Khan.⁽³⁾ I do not sympathize with the Persians on the last point, as we should, I think, have refused a similar demand for extradition. Had the Russian Government persisted in this attitude and refused their assent to the general advance, there is every probability that the Persian Government would have fallen, and that the whole Persian question would have been once more in the melting pot. It is absolutely essential to maintain the present Government in Tehran in power for the time being, and it was for this reason that, in accordance with Sir Edward Grey's proposal, I sent for Benckendorff on Saturday last, and urged that the advance should be completed. Happily the Russian Government had already agreed to it, although we were ignorant here of the fact. Now that this point has been settled, we have telegraphed to Barclay to give advice to the Persian Government to be as conciliatory as possible towards the Russian Government, and to make a friendly demonstration in their favour. We have throughout given conciliatory advice to the Persian Chargé d'Affaires here, but I do not think that he carries any weight.

I was reading to-day your interview with Stolypine about the Aigun Railway.⁽⁴⁾ It makes me think how shallow must be the feeling for our *entente* for Stolypine to hint that our action in that matter would be a danger to it. I should have thought that he might still have had some remembrance of the very solid support which we gave to Russia when she was in a very bad way last winter in the Near East. . . .⁽⁵⁾

Yours ever,

CHARLES HARDINGE.

⁽³⁾ [It is stated in the Annual Report on Russia for 1910 that the Persian Government complained that a detachment of Russian troops had supported a rebellious chieftain, named Rahim Khan, in January, 1910. When the detachment was withdrawn he was defeated and took refuge in Russian territory. (F.O. 11045/11045/11/38.)]

⁽⁴⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 116, No. 104.]

⁽⁵⁾ [The omitted paragraphs refer to the Cretan question and home affairs.]

No. 112.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/1008.

St Petersburg, February 21, 1910.

6210/5019/10/44A.

D. 8.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 64.) Confidential.

R. 9.45 P.M.

French Amb[assado]r has enquired of me on two occasions whether I had heard that Italian Amb[assado]r at Berlin had informed his French colleague and his British colleague that a secret understanding had been arranged at Racconigi⁽²⁾ between Italy and [group undecypherable: ? Russia] and that Rome and Vienna had also come to a secret arrangement. He had enquired of Mr. Isvolski whether he had any information as to the latter and had received a negative reply. I told my French colleague that I had received no news on the subject and that I had always considered that Mr. Isvolski had unreservedly told us all that had passed at Racconigi between himself and the Italian Gov[ermen]t. French Amb[assado]r remarked that Italian Amb[assado]r at Berlin would hardly have given his colleagues information which was inaccurate.

MINUTE.

So far as we are aware, what passed at Racconigi⁽²⁾ was that M. Izvolski asked Signor Tittoni whether Italy's engagements with Austria-Hungary were such as to prevent her from co-operating with Russia in maintaining the *status quo* in the Balkans and that Signor Tittoni replied that there were no such engagements.

This can hardly be called "a secret understanding."

As for a secret arrangement between Austria-Hungary and Italy, Sir A. Nicolson does not tell us where it is supposed to have been concluded or what it is supposed to be about—presumably the Balkans.

Signor Panza is said to have given the same information to Sir E. Goschen as to M. Cambon. We might enquire of him whether this is the case.

H. N.

Feb 22, 1910.

E. A. C.

Feb. 24.

R. P. M.

L. M.

C. H.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 41); to Berlin (as No. 14); to Vienna (as No. 12); to Rome (as No. 40)—adding "Have you any information?"]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 79, No. 70, note ⁽¹⁾.]

No. 113.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1008.

6913/5019/10/44A.

(No. 101.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. February 21, 1910.

Sir,

R. February 28, 1910.

I asked Monsieur Iswolsky this morning if he had received the Austrian reply on Saturday as he had anticipated. He replied in the affirmative. I enquired if it were satisfactory. His Excellency said he could hardly give me the details till he had laid the whole matter before the Emperor, but that then he would tell me all. I observed that I had understood from a fragmentary conversation we had had at a party last night that Vienna accepted the three or four points which he had submitted, but that she objected to their being brought to the notice of the Powers.

His Excellency said that it would be more correct to say that the Austrian Government did not object to the principles which he had enunciated; and that they certainly demurred to their being formally communicated to the Powers. I enquired what he proposed to do in regard to his Press. The papers had been following keenly and closely the discussions, without of course having any knowledge of their particulars, and they would expect to be informed in some form or another as to what had been concluded. If the Press were to receive information, presumably and "a fortiori" the Powers would be also enlightened. Monsieur Iswolsky said that this would undoubtedly have to be the case in some form or another; but he had not yet exhausted his resources for finding a formula which might satisfy Austria-Hungary.

I have, &c.
A. NICOLSON.

No. 114.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1008.

6492/5019/10/44A.

Tel. (No. 13.) Secret.

Paris, D. February 23, 1910.

R. February 24, 1910.

Your tel[egram] 41 repeating Petersburg No. 64 Confidential.⁽¹⁾

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] says that he has not been able to fathom the question whether secret agreements exist between Italy and Russia and between Italy and Austria. Personally he has no doubt that there is an agreement between Italy and Russia; but he doubts it being more than a record of Italy having no designs on Albania and the desire of both Powers to maintain the status quo in the Balkan Peninsula (on this matter see my private letter of Oct[ober] 30 last).⁽²⁾

As to a secret agreement between Italy and Austria M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] says that French Amb[assado]r at Rome to whom he has sent all the telegrams recently received on the subject strenuously denies the existence of any such agreement and quotes Mr. Tittoni with whom he dined two days ago in support of his denial. Mr. Tittoni said that there never had been any question of a secret agreement with Austria whilst he was in office. As M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] remarks, this evidence is no proof against its existence . . .⁽³⁾ and Mr. Barrère does not like it to be supposed that such an agreement could be arranged without his becoming aware of it. M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] is inclined to believe that there is such a secret agreement, but he doubts it being more than a mutual repudiation of designs on Albania and a desire that the status quo in the Balkan Peninsula shall be maintained (see my same private letter). He questioned the Italian Amb[assado]r today and was told by him that he had no official information on the subject.

MINUTE.

It has for some time been a matter of common notoriety that there is some form of agreement between Austria and Italy relating to Albania. It is, I believe, a self denying protocol. There is nothing new about it.

C. H.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 126, No. 112, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. The letter (Grey MSS., Vol. 12) refers to M. Pichon's meeting with M. Iswolski just after the Russian visit to Racconigi.]

⁽³⁾ [A few words of a personal character are here omitted.]

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir C. Hardinge.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Hardinge,

St. Petersburg, February 28, 1910.

Many thanks for your letter of the 15th.⁽²⁾ I did not wish in my letter of the 9th⁽³⁾ to convey the impression that the Russian Government (*i.e.*, Iswolsky, Stolypine, etc.) had any cause of complaint against us, for they certainly have not, and I am sure that on the whole they fully appreciate our attitude and policy towards them. I wished, at the risk of being considered a bore as I have so frequently chanted the same refrain, to point out that we should keep the fact constantly in view that the opponents to the entente—and neither their importance nor their number should be minimised—are always on the look out for any incident which would give them any plausible grounds for asserting that the entente is of no advantage to Russia. The remarks which Stolypine made to me in regard to the Aigun line were prompted by this knowledge.⁽⁴⁾ In a few words the position is as follows. The sincere supporters of the entente are the Emperor, Stolypine, Iswolsky, the liberal press, and perhaps a large number of liberal and progressive deputies and others. The opponents are some members of the Cabinet, the Court circles in great measure, the Right parties, and very many in the Army, bureaucracy and elsewhere, and the “Right” press—a pretty formidable array. So long as Stolypine and Iswolsky remain in office our entente is safe, but as I have more than once observed I would not answer for the results if they were to give up their portefeuilles. I hope that with time the number of our friends will increase, but we must be cautious and careful. We can hardly expect that in less than three years the memories and traditions of the past will be obliterated entirely. In several sections in our own country this has not, alas, been the case, and we can hardly hope that the evolution will move more rapidly or more generally here. . . .⁽⁵⁾

Y[ou]rs ever,
A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [Hardinge MSS., Vol. II of 1910.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 124–5, No. 111.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 120–2, No. 108.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 116, No. 104.]

⁽⁵⁾ [The rest of this letter refers to the Anglo-Russian loan to Persia; the Manchurian railway schemes; the relations of M. Isvolski and Count von Aehrenthal; and other matters of minor importance.]

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1003.

6612/5019/10/44A.

Tel. (No. 12.) Confidential.

Rome, February 24, 1910.

D. 1.40 P.M.

R. 5.0 P.M.

Your telegram No. 40.⁽¹⁾

I have no information beyond that contained [in] my despatch No. 216 of Oct[ober] 29.⁽²⁾

May not rumour referred to be explained by M. Tittoni's avowed attempt to sound Austro-Hungarian Government as to making declaration in favour of maintenance of status quo in Balkans, which step he could hardly have contemplated without previous

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 126, No. 112, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 81–3, No. 73.]

discussion with M. Isvolsky at Raccenigi a week earlier?⁽¹⁾ If so, supposed arrangement between Italy and Austria might also be interpreted to mean that the latter [*sic*] [former] had agreed to withdraw proposal on assurance that Austro-Hungarian Government would approach Russia directly in this sense.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 70, No. 70, and *note* (¹).]

No. 117.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1003.

Vienna, February 24, 1910.

6599/5019/10/44A.

D. 1.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 13.) Secret.

R. 3.15 P.M.

I have heard nothing to confirm rumour mentioned in St. Petersburg telegram No. 64 repeated to me yesterday.⁽¹⁾

Count Aehrenthal has more than once said to me that Raccenigi visit, although irritating to Austria-Hungary on account of its form, has resulted in nothing detrimental to Austrian interests and that Italian Government had given at Berlin and Vienna satisfactory assurances as to what had passed at Raccenigi.⁽²⁾

It seems to me most improbable that a secret agreement should have been recently negotiated between Italy and Austria on the Balkan question, firstly because relations between Rome and Vienna are, as Count Aehrenthal told me recently, far from satisfactory and devoid of the mutual confidence which must exist before secret engagements can be entered into; secondly because Count Aehrenthal's present policy is to do nothing which can encourage hope that he seeks to disturb status quo in the Balkans.

I do not think therefore that he would enter just now into a secret agreement whose effect would only be to tie his hands in the event of a crisis arising in the Near East.

Private. The Italian Ambassador here shows little sympathy for Austro-Russian rapprochement and it is possible that the Italian Ambassador at Berlin, inspired by similar sentiments, may have hinted vaguely at a secret arrangement existing between Vienna and Rome in order to throw suspicion as to Count Aehrenthal's straightforwardness.

. MINUTE.

This is a mare's nest, I think, and a lot of money has been wasted on telegraphing.

L. M.
C. H.
E. G.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 126, No. 112.]

(²) [*v. immediately preceding document, and note* (¹).]

No. 118.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1003.

6616/5019/10/44A.

(No. 76.) Confidential.

Paris, D. February 24, 1910.

Sir,

R. February 25, 1910.

I went to see M. Pichon yesterday and met him as he was coming out of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. His Excellency was pessimistic with regard to the situation in Greece, the Balkan Peninsula and Turkey. He informed me that he had had a conversation with the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador as to the desirability in

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the interests of peace of a successful issue to the negotiations for an Austro-Russian understanding. Count Khevenhuller did not seem to consider the conclusion of any written agreement to be necessary or advisable, but thought that an exchange of ideas was all that was desirable for the moment. At present things were quiet in the Balkans and it would be time enough when they looked threatening for Austria and Russia to come to an understanding of a formal kind. M. Pichon is not of opinion that things look quiet at Athens nor does he consider the present state of relations between Turkey and Bulgaria to be satisfactory. He had informed the Bulgarian Minister yesterday that Europe could not allow Bulgaria to set the Balkans in a blaze.

His Excellency expressed his belief that the German Government have discouraged Count Aehrenthal in his desire for an Austro-Russian "entente" and that he has gone to Berlin in order to ascertain how far he can go in such a purpose without giving serious offence to Germany. He considers that the German Government desire to remain the intermediary for any arrangements of importance between Austria and Russia and that Count Aehrenthal wishes to emancipate himself from German tutelage.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

No. 119.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/888.

6887/5684/10/44A.

Tel. (No. 70.)

St. Petersburg, February 26, 1910.

D. 3.27 P.M.

R. 4.45 P.M.

At a brief audience which I had of King Ferdinand yesterday,⁽¹⁾ prior to the diplomatic reception, His Majesty spoke with much seriousness of the gravity of the outlook in South-Eastern Europe. He said that he was most anxious for peace, and that Bulgarians inhabiting Turkish vilayets had shown what he described as a "sublime abnegation" and an earnest wish to be loyal Turkish subjects, but that action of Turkish Government in Macedonia was placing a very heavy strain on them. I mentioned that Hakki Pasha had stated that he was desirous of acting impartially and with moderation. His Majesty said that quite likely Hakki Pasha was sincere, but that he was but one man, and there was the committee behind him. He regarded [the] future with grave uneasiness. He touched upon Greek question as also containing possibilities of serious trouble. In short, His Majesty was exceedingly pessimistic.⁽²⁾ As other Ambassadors were waiting, I could not enter into a full conversation. He did not touch upon politics with my French colleague.

⁽¹⁾ [The King and Queen of the Bulgarians arrived in St. Petersburg on February 23. (F O 371/888. 6928/5684/10/7.)]

⁽²⁾ [*cp infra*, pp. 134-5, No. 126.]

No. 120.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/1003.

7018/5019/10/44.

Tel. (No. 97.)

Near East.

Foreign Office, February 26, 1910.

I have received a communication from Russian Ambassador to the following effect:—

Austrian reply to last Russian communication has been received at St. Petersburg: it makes no objection to the three points formulated by Russia, but it is clear that the

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Vienna (No. 14) on February 28.]

Austrian Gov[ernment] desires to avoid a communication to the Powers and proposes to confine action to the publication of a simple statement that the exchange of views between the two Gov[ernments] has had a satisfactory effect.

Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] has replied in writing that there is conformity of political principles in the Balkans between Russian and Austria, and that there is now no further obstacle to the resumption of normal diplomatic relations between the two Cabinets. But he has added that in his view a simple statement such as that desired would not be sufficient, and that, in the interests of general peace, it would be well to associate the other Powers with the principles professed by Russia and Austria, so that, in the event of the status quo being threatened, an immediate exchange of views can take place between the interested Powers. In consequence he has renewed his proposal to communicate to the other Powers the points on which Russian and Austrian Gov[ernments] are in agreement.

C[oun]t Benckendorff is therefore instructed to inform me confidentially of M. Isvolsky's views, and to express the hope that we will give Russia our moral support at Vienna to overcome the opposition of C[oun]t Achrenthal to a proposal to which Russia attaches great importance.

I shall be glad to support M. Isvolsky's proposition, but cannot do so without disclosing to the Austrian Gov[ernment] that I am aware of what has passed. You should ask M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] exactly how he thinks our support can best be given.

No. 121.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/1003.

6890/5019/10/44A.

Tel. (No. 73.)

St. Petersburg, D. February 27, 1910.

R. February 27, 1910, 9-30 P.M.

Near East. Your telegram No. 97.⁽²⁾

M. Isvolsky thinks that it might be possible for Sir F. Cartwright to mention to Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs that His Majesty's Government have heard generally that the discussions between the Cabinets of Vienna and St. Petersburg are likely to result in an understanding as to the principles on which the foreign policy of the two Governments in Balkans will be based, and that His Majesty's Government, while welcoming such a result, think that it would be of great advantage if all the Powers were given an opportunity of associating themselves with Austria and Russia, and of concurring with principles which may be laid down. He thinks that this could well be said without disclosing that His Majesty's Government have been made acquainted with the details.⁽³⁾ He recognises that matter would have to be handled at Vienna with tact and delicacy.

Personally, I am of opinion that if an understanding between Austria and Russia is to receive public approval here, and without public approval an understanding would have but a transient and limited life, it is most desirable that there should not be grounds for believing that any solely bipartite arrangement had been made of which the other Powers have no official knowledge, and with which they have not been invited to associate themselves.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Vienna (as No. 13) on February 28.]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 109-10, No. 98, and pp. 130-1, No. 120.]

MINUTE.

It would be a very delicate task for Sir F. Cartwright to undertake. Sir E. Grey proposes to see C[oun]t Mensdorff and to speak to him within the next few days.⁽⁴⁾

C. H.
E. G.

⁽⁴⁾ [Sir F. Cartwright was informed on the 28th that Sir E. Grey would take an early opportunity of himself speaking to Count Mensdorff. (Tel. to Vienna (No. 15), repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 99). (F.O. 371/1003 6890/5019/10/44A.)) Sir E. Grey's telegram No. 16 of March 2, 1910, describes the interview which took place on that day, *v. infra*, p. 135, No. 127.]

No. 122.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/833.
6887/5684/10/44A.
Tel. (No. 100.)

Foreign Office, February 28, 1910, 2 p.m.

Your tel[egram] No. 70.⁽¹⁾

In the event of your having a further opportunity of conversation with the King of Bulgaria or one of his Ministers you might inform him of the contents of Sir G. Lowther's desp[atch] No. 54 of Jan[uary] 31,⁽²⁾ sent to you in print.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 130, No. 119.]

⁽²⁾ [The desp[atch] stated that steps were being taken to modify the "Bands Law" as applied to the Macedonian provinces, which had led to so much dissatisfaction particularly on the part of the Bulgarian element. (F.O. 371/998. 4234/926/10/44.) On March 2 Sir A. Nicolson reported that he had informed the King. (F.O. 371/833. 7855/5684/10)]

No. 123.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/833.
7367/5684/10/44A.
(No. 118.)
Sir,

*St. Petersburg, D. February 28, 1910.
R. March 3, 1910.*

General Paprikoff, the Bulgarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, appears to have accorded an interview to a newspaper correspondent on the 25th instant as the "Bourse Gazette" publishes a statement which His Excellency is alleged to have made.

The General asserted that Bulgaria sincerely wished to maintain peaceful and friendly relations with Turkey, and all the efforts of the Bulgarian Government were directed to that end. At the same time it must be confessed that the situation in the Balkans is, generally speaking, alarming and Bulgaria must be ready for all contingencies. Crete and Macedonia are both acute questions and danger of complications is threatened from these two quarters. It is to be hoped that the Powers will find means to pacify both Greece and Crete, but the danger of a Turco-Greek conflict exists. The present condition of Macedonia far from justifies those hopes, which its Christian, especially the Bulgarian, population cherished, after the promulgation of a constitution in Turkey. The dissatisfaction of the Bulgarians in Macedonia naturally finds a sympathetic echo in Bulgaria, and the irritation of the whole Bulgarian nation against Turkey paralyses, to a great extent, the efforts of the Bulgarian Government towards establishing friendly relations with Turkey. The internal situation in Turkey is far from brilliant, and Bulgaria is more interested than

any other country in the internal condition of Turkey, and cannot remain indifferent to what is occurring there, and may be compelled *volens volens* to take part in current events. The possibility of holding aloof from any active participation in them will depend, to a great extent, on the relations actually existing between Bulgaria and Turkey at the critical moment, which in their turn greatly depend on the situation in Macedonia. In any case the general situation is somewhat alarming, and the adoption of decisive measures may be necessary for guaranteeing peace in the Balkans.

I was told that it was probable that a disavowal of what was reported would appear, but hitherto none has been forthcoming. On the other hand the Bulgarian Prime Minister, Monsieur Malinof, gave an interview to a correspondent of the "Bourse Gazette" in which he considerably modified the utterances which had been attributed to his colleague. Monsieur Malinof said that it was betraying no secret to state that there exists at the present time a necessity for exchanging views on Balkan affairs, though the situation in the Balkan Peninsula was not so unsatisfactory as it appeared to many. The Protecting Powers would doubtless find means for averting a collision between Turkey and Greece. As to Macedonia, Monsieur Malinof continued to believe that the Turkish Government would establish such conditions of life for the Christians as would enable friendly relations to be maintained between Turkey and those Balkan States which adjoined her territory. Bulgaria had no wish to interfere in the internal affairs of another country, but she is so closely interested in the matter that it was impossible for her to remain indifferent as to what takes place in Macedonia. The idea of a Balkan Federation was far from realisation at present, and could only be regarded as a dream. Nevertheless, the establishment of good relations between the various States in the Balkans is possible.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTES.

This is apparently the interview which gave such offence at Constantinople.

General Paprikoff's remarks were certainly most imprudent.

A. P.
L. M.
R. P. M.

C. H.
E. G.

No. 124.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 971/1008
7258/5019/10/44A.
Tel. (No. 74.)

St. Petersburg, March 1, 1910.

D. 9.5 P.M.
R. 1.10 P.M.

Austria and Russia.

Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs pointed out that they asked German Government to assist negotiations in the same sense as the request made to His Majesty's Government. German Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that Count Aehrenthal had merely made the most passing allusions to the negotiations, and as German Government were consequently unaware of what had passed they could not give any advice. Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs says that Germany is not anxious that negotiations should end satisfactorily. He strongly confirmed my opinion (see last paragraph of my immediately preceding telegram)⁽¹⁾ that Russian opinion would condemn any arrangement *à deux*, and he said that M. Isvolsky was determined to maintain as a *sine quâ non* condition (?) of association of all Powers in whatever might be settled.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 131, No. 121.]

MINUTES.

It will be a pity if M. Isvolsky insists. He cannot expect to get everything at once. But see last paragraph of Sir A. Nicolson's Tel[egram] No. 73.⁽²⁾ Perhaps a solution might be found in the simple communication of the arrangement to the other Powers, without asking them to associate themselves with it.

L. M.

think we might make a suggestion to Sir A. Nicolson in this sense.⁽³⁾

C. II.

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 131, No. 121.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *infra*, p. 135, No. 128.]

No. 125.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1003.

Vienna, March 2, 1910.

7350/5019/10/44A.

D. 12.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 15.) Confidential.

R. 2 P.M.

Your telegrams Nos. 14⁽¹⁾ and 15.⁽²⁾

Russian Chargé d'Affaires saw Count Aehrenthal yesterday afternoon and urged upon him Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs' desire that the results of Austro-Hungarian rapprochement should be communicated to the Powers. Count Aehrenthal seems to have reserved his reply as to this point and to have said that he must have time for reflection. Impression left on the mind of the Russian Chargé d'Affaires was that Count Aehrenthal is showing signs of a disposition to yield.

Count Aehrenthal leaves for the country to-day so I am not likely to see him till he returns early next week.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 130-1, No. 120, and *note* (1).]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 132, No. 121, *note* (4).]

No. 126.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/833.

7356/5684/10/44A.

St. Petersburg, D. March 2, 1910, 8.40 P.M.

Tel. (No. 77.)

R. March 3, 1910, 8 A.M.

Near East.

M. Isvolsky gave me to-day summary of his conversations with King Ferdinand and the two Bulgarian Ministers.⁽²⁾ His summary filled in outlines of what I have already telegraphed. He pressed the King to visit Constantinople, but H[is] M[ajesty] hesitates on the ground that owing to his intimacy with the old régime he would be regarded with suspicion by the new régime and that he might run the risk of being poisoned. This latter remark seems to have been made in all seriousness and it is an odd admission to have made. The sum of the matter is that Bulgarians have no confidence whatever in the stability of the new régime: that the calling out of the Redifs is considered significant as indicating some intentions of Turkey either against Bulgaria or Greece: that the efflux from Macedonia of needy Bulgarians into Bulgaria is a source of danger and a cause of expense to Bulgaria: that the action of the Turkish Gov[ernment] in Macedonia points to a desire to crush the Bulgarian race: that the policy of the new régime is harder for the Macedonian Bulgarians to

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Constantinople (as No. 50); to Sofia (as No. 9).]

⁽²⁾ [Then on a visit to St. Petersburg. *cp. supra*, p. 130, No. 119, and *note* (1); and *infra*, p. 141, No. 133; pp. 143-8, Nos. 136-9.]

bear than that of the old : that the praises of and sympathy with new régime expressed by Europe have given Turkish Gov[ernmen]t to believe they can do no wrong : and that no faith can be placed in assurances of individual members of the Cabinet until they are translated into acts. On the other hand Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t are animated with most pacific intentions, etc. M. Isvolsky has endeavoured to persuade the King and his Ministers that their view of the matter is not in accordance with real facts and that they should realise that the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t have given evident signs of a desire to pursue a just and conciliatory policy towards the Christians in Macedonia.

It is officially announced that the King of Servia will arrive here in about a fortnight.

No. 127.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/1003.
7350/5019/10/44A.
Tel. (No. 16.)

Foreign Office, March 2, 1910, 9 p.m.

I took an opportunity of asking Count Mensdorff to-day,⁽²⁾ how the amicable conversations between Russia and Austria were proceeding. He replied that he hoped they would result in restoration of normal relations on basis of desire to preserve status quo, so that in event of trouble in Near East the two Powers would be in a position to discuss situation at any moment. I said this would be a real satisfaction and if so it would be well that all the Powers should have an opportunity of associating themselves with this view and expressing concurrence in the principle. It would then be known that if trouble did arise in the Near East all the Powers would approach the question from the same point of view.

In answer to some enquiries from Count Mensdorff as to Greece and Crete, I observed that the effect of an expression of all the Powers in favour of the status quo generally would incidentally strengthen the hands of the four Powers in preventing Crete from disturbing it.⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 109).]

⁽²⁾ [For Count Mensdorff's report *v. O.-U.-I.*, II, pp. 720-2, No. 2019.]

⁽³⁾ [Despatch No. 20 of March 2, to Sir F. Cartwright, No. 70 to Sir A. Nicolson, repeats this information at greater length. (F.O. 371/1003. 7718/5019/10/44.)]

No. 128.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/1003.
7258/5019/10/44A.
Tel. (No. 110.)

Foreign Office, March 2, 1910, 9.30 p.m.

Your tel[egram] No. 74.⁽¹⁾

If M. Isvolsky is unable to get C[oun]t Achrenthal to agree to the association of all Powers in the proposed Austro-Russian agreement, a solution might possibly be found in the simple communication of the arrangement to the other Powers.

You might make this as your own personal suggestion.

I took an opportunity of speaking to Count Mensdorff today in sense desired by M. Isvolsky in your telegram No. 73.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 183, No. 124.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 181, No. 121. The last paragraph of the above telegram was added to the draft in Sir Edward Grey's own hand.]

Note communicated by Servian Chargé d'Affaires, March 4, 1910.

F.O. 371/1006.

8280/8280/10/44.

Légation Royale de Serbie

On connaît les procédés par lesquels, sous l'ancien régime en Turquie, les albanais et les autorités turques se sont servis—surtout dans l'Éparchie de Rashka Prizren—pour chasser de leurs foyers les habitants serbes. Par des menaces, des assassinats, des incendies volontaires et des violences de toutes sortes les serbes ont été forcés soit d'abandonner leurs propriétés, leurs foyers et d'émigrer en Serbie, soit de devenir, sur leurs propres propriétés simples fermiers locataires de leurs usurpateurs, souvent leurs fermiers antérieurs. Ces procédés étaient employés systématiquement: les serbes ne pouvaient nulle part trouver de protection, parce que les autorités elles-mêmes favorisaient les usurpateurs. Les albanais par suite ont réussi à s'emparer d'un grand nombre de propriétés, à en disposer sans restriction aucune et à agir comme de véritables propriétaires, quoique, légalement, ces propriétés appartenaient aux serbes. Un très grand nombre de serbes ainsi chassés de leurs foyers ou passés au rang de simples fermiers ont entre leurs mains encore aujourd'hui les titres des propriétés dont ils ont été dépossédés.

Le nouveau régime en Turquie s'est rendu compte qu'une telle situation ne pouvait être maintenue sans ébranler la confiance accordée au gouvernement de la liberté, de la légalité et de l'ordre. Les garanties de la liberté individuelle et de la propriété étant les principes fondamentaux sur lesquels le nouveau régime compte avec raison pour assurer son maintien, il a été décidé qu'un terme devait être mis à l'état de choses ci-dessus exposé. A cet effet, deux mesures ont été prises.

D'après des informations de Constantinople, auxquelles le Gouvernement a fait donner la plus grande publicité, le Gouvernement prépare un projet de loi concernant la restitution aux propriétaires légitimes des propriétés dont ils ont été dépossédés illégalement et par violence. Les dispositions que cette loi prescrira pour arriver à ce but ne sont pas encore connues, mais dans tous les cas on doit s'attendre à ce que soit reconnu le principe que les preuves écrites concernant le droit à la propriété, d'après les lois turques, recevront leur effet. Les titres de propriété (tapons) devraient donc avoir dans cette question une importance décisive. Par suite il est naturel que l'annonce du projet de loi a inspiré aux intéressés de la confiance et de la patience.

Mais, tandis qu'était publiée la mesure ci-dessus, qui ne pouvait que provoquer la sympathie pour les jeunes turcs, les autorités dans les districts où cette mesure devra être appliquée recevaient des ordres différents. Il résulte en effet d'informations reçues de source sûre que, dans les sandjaks de Pristina et d'Ipek l'autorité compétente a décrété, au commencement de cette année, une autorisation aux termes de laquelle tous ceux qui sont en possession de bien[s] fonciers peuvent, jusqu'à la fin du mois de février (vieux style), obtenir gratuitement des titres de propriété, et remplacer leurs anciens titres (tapons) par des titres nouveaux ou en obtenir de tout à fait nouveaux, s'ils n'en possèdent pas d'anciens. Les formalités pour cette obtention de titres sont excessivement simples et pour ainsi dire insignifiantes.

Il est facile de voir les conséquences qu'aura cette mesure.

La gratuité et la simplicité de la procédure tendent à supprimer la recherche ou la vérification des titres de propriété. Un très grand nombre de serbes seront donc par cette mesure soi-disant légale, privés des seules preuves légales qu'ils ont de leur droit de propriété. De cette façon sera créé un état de choses pseudo-légal en attendant l'application de la loi projetée, qui sans aucun doute le sanctionnera.

En outre, un autre danger pour les serbes sera le résultat de la mesure en question. Ceux qui sont restés sur leurs propriétés, à titre de fermiers, et qui comme tels ont été gardés seulement pour cette raison que les nouveaux maîtres n'avaient aucun document prouvant leur droit de propriété sur les terres qu'ils ont usurpées, seront maintenant entièrement à la merci de leurs nouveaux maîtres. Ceux-ci en

effet n'ont jamais caché, et cachent encore moins maintenant leur intention de chasser les serbes et de les remplacer par des albanais. C'est du reste ce qu'ils avaient déjà coutume de faire mais, une fois qu'ils deviendront propriétaires légaux des terres, ils le feront naturellement avec encore moins de ménagements.

Enfin, les albanais—grâce à la mesure en question—réussiront à obtenir des titres de propriété aussi pour les terres communales (*meraja*), dont ils se sont également emparés. Ces propriétés servent de pâturage pour les bestiaux, et elles forment la propriété collective de la commune. Les albanais ont toujours cherché à s'en emparer, mais ils ont toujours été à ce sujet en conflit avec les paysans, ce qui se comprend, puisque ce sont les seuls pâturages qui restent à la disposition de ces derniers. Légaliser une pareille usurpation signifie priver de moyens d'existence non seulement les serbes fermiers mais aussi le petit nombre d'entre eux qui sont restés propriétaires.

La susdite mesure des autorités aura donc pour conséquence inévitable d'activer l'émigration des serbes de Vieille Serbie, émigration qui a commencé il y a trente ans, et qui est due à l'anarchie existante sous l'ancien régime et à la politique que ce régime poursuivait de concessions constantes aux albanais.

En conséquence de tout ce qui précède, le Ministre de Serbie à Constantinople a reçu du Gouvernement Royal des instructions pour attirer sur ce sujet l'attention du Gouvernement Impérial et pour le prier d'intervenir et de suspendre l'exécution d'une mesure contraire aussi bien à la légalité qu'à l'équité. Le Ministre de Serbie a aussi été prié d'informer sur ce sujet les ambassadeurs de Grande-Bretagne, de France, d'Italie et de Russie et de solliciter leurs bons offices auprès de la Sublime Porte en faveur des intérêts ci-dessus exposés des serbes, sujets ottomans.⁽¹⁾

8 Mars 1910.

(1) [A copy of this note was sent to Sir B. Whitehead on March 4, in Sir Edward Grey's despatch No. 14. (F.O. 371/1003. 7350; 5019/10/44A.)]

No. 130.

Sur A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/979.
8691/8691/10/38.
(No. 121.)
Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. March 5, 1910.

R. March 14, 1910.

M. Wesselitzky, the "Novoe Vremya" London correspondent called upon me a day or two ago to give me the results of his observations on the trend of Russian opinion, so far as it could be gathered in the capital, in regard to foreign affairs. He said that he had been much struck by the growth of German influence which he found to be particularly strong in the "*tchinovnik*" class and of course among the Right parties. At the same time he did not consider that the desire to move towards Berlin was very deep, and he was of opinion that it was based on two erroneous impressions which he intended to do his best to remove. It was, he knew, necessary that Russia should keep in good relations with Germany, and this fact he had brought forward prominently in his recent lecture on the relations between England and Russia. He had indeed laid such emphasis upon it that he had received through a third party the thanks of the German Ambassador. Nevertheless he was strongly of opinion that Russia should maintain to the full her alliance with France and her friendship with England; not only to preserve the equilibrium in Europe but to secure the "salvation of Europe." Were Russia to weaken in her adherence to the policy of the two Powers above mentioned, German preponderance would at once be established over all the Continent of Europe. The objections which had been raised to the present policy of Russia were of a two-fold character. On the one hand the Right party, anxious to

preserve the monarchical and semi-autocratic principle in Russia, considered that Germany was the truly conservative Power, the staunch defender of order and stability. It was his endeavour to show that Germany properly speaking was in reality not a conservative Power since the great increase of the Social Democratic Party both in numbers and in influence. England, he asserted, had always been a more conservative country than Germany, assuming that no Radical changes were to occur in it. Again many were of opinion that the naval and military force of Germany was so preponderant that England and France were at a considerable disadvantage in comparison with her, and could not be counted as valuable friends. He thought that he could remove misapprehensions and apprehensions on that point; but in reference to the first point it might be more difficult. His proposed method for achieving this end seemed to me curious and not particularly efficacious. He remarked that he had found that in St. Petersburg intelligent ladies exercised a very considerable influence in home politics and he had persuaded a lady convert from reactionary circles to open a "salon" whence moderate liberalism would be propagated among influential circles, and the prospect of Germany becoming shortly a social democratic state would be explained.

I told M. Wesselitzky that the strength of German influence had always been well known to me, and I had always treated it as a most important factor. I asked whether he considered from the conversations which he had had with various people that the "national" movement in Russia would strike roots in the country. He replied that it was more likely that the extreme form of the national movement, as advocated by the Right parties, would find a greater response than the more moderate kind advocated by the Duma Nationalist party. The peasants would more readily agree with the strictly exclusive programme of the union of Russian People than with any other. So far as his observations permitted he thought that it was an error to disparage the extension and influence of the propaganda of the Union of Russian People. He understood that it was getting a grip on the country.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTES.

Anybody connected with the "Novoe Vremya" which is a newspaper entirely without any stable principles or convictions, excites so much mistrust that it is hard to know how much importance to attach to M. Vesselski's impressions of Russian opinion.

They are not very encouraging. He sees a growth of German influence and thinks that the peasants are likely to fall under the sway of the reactionary Union of Russian People (not *the* Russian People) which is hostile to Great Britain and France.

M. Vesselski's attempt to prove that Germany is no longer a conservative Power appears to be the feeblest kind of juggling with words. From the point of view of foreign policy she still clearly stands on the side of monarchy—not to say of autocracy—no matter how many Social Democrats may sit in the Reichstag. His method of inculcating the above lesson by starting a *salon* is about of a piece with the lesson itself

H. N.

March 14, 1910.

R. P. M.

There is not much in this

L. M.

C. H.

E. G.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 871/1003.

8559/5019/10/44A.

(No. 27.) Confidential.

Sir,

Rome, D. March 5, 1910.

R. March 12, 1910.

It would be interesting to know the precise terms in which the confidences of the Italian Ambassador to the French Ambassador at Berlin were made, which have convinced the French Minister for Foreign Affairs of the existence of a secret understanding with regard to the Near East between Italy and Austria as well as between Italy and Russia, entered into after the visit of the Russian Emperor to Racconigi.⁽¹⁾

I have endeavoured, by addressing certain apparently innocuous questions to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, to ascertain whether I could induce him to make any admissions which would throw light on the report in question, and so to my knowledge has Monsieur Barrère, who has also attempted to sound Signor Tittoni. But our efforts in this respect have been vain, and I am somewhat at a loss to understand what the basis could be for such a secret understanding as the Italian Ambassador in Berlin has referred to. I gather from the French Ambassador that Signor Pansa had informed Monsieur Jules Cambon that the initiative, in the negotiations which are apparently still in progress for an Austro-Russian rapprochement, came from Monsieur Isvolsky. This information [sic], which does not at first sight seem in harmony with the reports from His Majesty's Representatives which I have been enabled to peruse, would acquire some justification if the theory which I have the honour to submit as a probable explanation of Signor Pansa's disclosures be the correct one.

It will be within your memory that immediately after the meeting at Racconigi Signor Tittoni volunteered to give me some information which I duly reported, and shortly afterwards maintained that I must have misunderstood him in making the report which I sent home directly after leaving him.⁽²⁾ The substance of what he then told me was that a complete identity of view existed between Italy and Russia as to the necessity for maintaining the *status quo* in the Balkans to which object their joint efforts would be directed, as was in fact announced at the time in an official communiqué. Further that, as all the Great Powers professed to have the same object in view, as the Austrian Government had repeatedly said as much, and as it was regrettable that a spirit of mutual mistrust in Balkan policy should continue, he was instructing the Italian Ambassador at Vienna to sound the Austrian Government as to whether the time had not in their opinion come for putting these professions in a concrete form. A refusal to do so would lay the objecting Power open to the suspicion of being insincere in such professions. Though Signor Tittoni did not precisely say as much, I certainly gathered from him that this step was the result of his conversations with Monsieur Isvolsky, and that they had agreed that the initiative might best be taken by Italy as the mutual friend of the two Powers whose rivalry had aggravated the recent crisis. The fact that the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Italian Foreign Office seemed visibly disconcerted by my referring to this step some days afterwards, and the subsequent repudiation by Signor Tittoni of the information which he had volunteered, suggested the obvious conclusion that Count von Aehrenthal had not seen his way to fall in with the suggestion of the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs. It may well be however that he repeated to Italy in definite terms his intention to adhere to the *status quo*, but at the same time preferred to choose his own time and method of approaching the Russian Government, as indeed he appears to have done after a sufficient interval had elapsed to discount any supposition that he was acting

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 79, No. 70, note (1).]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 81-3, No. 73.]

on the suggestion of Italy, whose attitude at the time of the Racconigi meeting he had every reason for not regarding with special good-will.

The allusions of the Italian Ambassador at Berlin may well have been therefore in the first place to the understanding arrived at at Racconigi, that Italy should endeavour to bring Austria and Russia together in a common declaration of policy as regards Near Eastern affairs, and in the second place to an understanding between Austria and Italy that the latter should drop her proposals for the moment, and leave it to Austria to come forward with a similar proposal to Russia at an opportune moment. There would thus also be justification for Signor Pansa's statement that the initiative for approaching the Austrian Government should really be placed to the credit of Monsieur Isvolsky.

It is difficult to see what other arrangement between Italy and Austria could have been contemplated. An understanding was arrived at ten years ago between the two countries, as indeed the Minister for Foreign Affairs admitted in conversation with me to-day, during the tenure of the Foreign Department by the Marchese Visconti Venosta, in accordance with which, it was understood, both countries reciprocally disinterested themselves in regard to Albania, and undertook to exchange information in case of any future change of policy. The concession obtained by Austria in respect of the Mitrovitza Railway scheme, which was not previously announced to Italy, was I believe, though I was not in Rome at the time, regarded here as a violation of this understanding, and Italy on her side has perhaps not altogether respected its spirit by refraining from endeavours to extend her influence on the opposite side of the Adriatic. However, so far as any such understanding has value, it already existed as regards Albania, the most vital consideration to Italy.

The period immediately following the Russian visit to Italy would appear to have been of all others the most unpropitious for this country to select for secret political negotiations with Austria, and the temptation to the latter to expose any disloyalty on her part to Russia, immediately after the pæans sung at Racconigi, would have been too strong to resist. It would seem therefore that any proposals made by Italy must have been put forward with the knowledge and in the interests of the Russian Government.

The Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, in speaking to me of the present Austro-Russian exchange of views, observed that there was no difficulty about agreeing to uphold the *status quo*, but that he thought it would be very difficult to arrive at anything in the way of a written agreement and was therefore sceptical as to any tangible results. His language thus tends to confirm the view that the existence of a new secret arrangement between Austria and Italy of any substantial character is mythical.

How far the hypothetical negotiations to which I have referred and the conclusions based on Signor Tittoni's somewhat unaccountable repudiation of his own statements would suffice to justify the allusions of the Italian Ambassador at Berlin I cannot pretend to judge, and can only return to the position from which I set out, namely that it would be interesting to know the precise terms of the observations on this subject which he made to Monsieur Jules Cambon.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1003.
 8694/5019/10/44A.
 (No. 123.)
 Sir,

*St. Petersburg, D. March 6, 1910.
 R. March 14, 1910.*

I read to M. Iswolsky the substance of the remarks which you had made to Count Mensdorff in regard to the discussions which were proceeding between Austria and Russia.⁽¹⁾ His Excellency asked me to convey to you his sincere thanks for your kindly action, and he expressed the opinion that the matter could not have been put better or more clearly. I asked him how matters stood at the present moment. He said pretty much as they were when he last spoke to me on the subject. He had, as I knew, suggested to Count d'Aehrenthal that all the Powers should be invited to associate themselves with the enunciation of principles regarding Balkan affairs. Count Berchtold had told him that a reply would be sent shortly, but that he doubted if Count d'Aehrenthal would feel himself in a position to agree with his proposal. I remarked that if such proved to be the case, perhaps he might suggest a simple communication to the Powers *à titre de renseignement*. M. Iswolsky replied that this had occurred to him, but that he must first see the reply from Vienna before deciding on what would be his next step.

I have, &c.
 A. NICOLSON.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 135, No. 127, and note (²).]

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/833.
 8695/5684/10/44A.
 (No. 124.)
 Sir,

*St. Petersburg, D. March 6, 1910.
 R. March 14, 1910.*

M. Iswolsky mentioned to me to-day that it was unfortunate that some portions of the German and Austrian press were criticising and misinterpreting the visits of the Kings of the Bulgarians and of Servia to St. Petersburg. In his opinion these visits could but be productive of good as the St. Petersburg Cabinet limited itself to giving sage and moderating counsels, and to endeavouring to remove the suspicions which Bulgaria entertained towards Turkey. He thought that King Ferdinand and his Ministers had been induced to modify to some extent the pessimistic views which they had held on their arrival, and that some impression had been produced on them by the advice which the Russian Government had given them to establish the best possible relations with Turkey, and to trust to the Sublime Porte following a conciliatory policy towards the Christians in Macedonia. Indeed M. Iswolsky gathered that the Bulgarian visitors had been a little disappointed at not finding that the Russian Government shared their apprehensions as to the future, and he had some little difficulty in procuring their assent to the communiqué which had been issued in regard to the results of the visit, and of which I transmitted a translation in my despatch No. 119 of the 4th instant.⁽¹⁾ His Excellency hoped that I would inform you of what had passed, and that I would lay stress on the fact that nothing but pacific counsels had been tendered.

(¹) [Not reproduced. The communiqué declared that Russia and Bulgaria had "come to the conclusion that on both sides there exists an equally firm intention to devote all efforts towards the maintenance of peace and tranquillity in the Balkans." (F.O. 371/833. 7902/5684/10/44A.)]

I told him that I had kept you fully informed, and that I was sure that you would appreciate the attitude of the Russian Government. I said that the Bill, which I had mentioned to King Ferdinand, for modifying the harsher provisions of the Bands Law would be presented to the Turkish Assembly to-morrow and would probably be passed.⁽²⁾ This measure would serve as a very evident proof of the good intentions of the Porte, and I hoped that it would be well received in Bulgaria.

M. Iswolsky mentioned that he had informed Count Berchtold of all that had passed, as he observed "*que maintenant nous causons sur les affaires.*"

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

(²) [v. *supra*, p 132, No. 122, and note (²)]

No. 134.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 371/1008.

8438/5019/10/44.

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 8, 1910.

The Austrian Ambassador informed me to-day, with reference to my suggestion that the other Powers should associate themselves with the agreement between Russia and Austria, that Count d'Aehrenthal did not consider that there was any new accord between Russia and Austria; there was therefore nothing out of which a declaration or manifesto could be made. All that happened was that Russia and Austria would resume normal relations.

I remarked that it was then rather difficult to be sure exactly what had taken place between Russia and Austria.

The Ambassador said that the stiffness had given place to normal relations. As to a declaration by the Powers, Count d'Aehrenthal did not think that the present situation in the Balkans required one.

I remarked to this that we should see how the situation developed.

I am, &c.

E. G[REY].

No. 135.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/1008.

8446/5019/10/44A.

Tel. (No. 16.) Confidential.

Vienna, March 10, 1910.

D. 8.10 P.M.

R. 9.30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 16.

Aehrenthal returned yesterday, and I had a long conversation with him this afternoon. He seemed to have somewhat changed his views with regard to the rapprochement with Russia. He said that he did not think it desirable to hurry on a definite agreement as to Balkan policy too quick, and showed an inclination to stop at the present point where it would be established that normal relations between Vienna and St. Petersburg had been restored. It would then be easy to discuss Balkan questions which might arise in an amicable spirit.

(¹) [This telegram was sent to St. Petersburg (as No 123) on March 11.]

Aehrenthal expressed himself sceptically as to the good effect likely to be produced by a common declaration of the Powers that they were in favour of the *status quo* in the Balkans. His present attitude appears to me to be that there will be nothing to communicate to the Powers, as no political agreement in the real sense of the word will be arrived at.

I enquired whether he would give a communiqué to the press as to the result of the conversation with M. Isvolsky. He said that he probably would, but must think the matter over. I was unable to obtain a clear statement from him as to whether this communiqué will be identic with the one which is likely to appear in St. Petersburg.

The impression left on my mind by the conversation is that Aehrenthal's present attitude has been influenced by the visit of the King of Bulgaria to St. Petersburg⁽²⁾ and the forthcoming visit of the King of Servia, which he described as politically clumsy and likely to arouse unrealisable ambitions in Balkan States. At the same time, he admits that he did not for a moment believe that the King of Bulgaria received any encouragement in St. Petersburg.

Finally, his Excellency dropped the remark that in dealing with the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs he had to be very careful.⁽³⁾

MINUTE.

The visits were ill-timed.

I. M.
C II.
E. G.

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 134-5, No. 126, and *note* ⁽²⁾.]

⁽³⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 110, No. 98, and *infra*, p. 146, No. 137.]

No. 136.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1003.

9613/5019/10/44A.

(No. 37A.) Confidential.

Vienna, D. March 11, 1910.

Sir,

R. March 21, 1910.

I have the honour to report that the day before yesterday Count Aehrenthal returned to Vienna from a stay in the country which has been prolonged, it is generally believed, in order to enable him to avoid meeting King Ferdinand and the Bulgarian Ministers who were passing through Vienna on their return from their visit to St. Petersburg.⁽¹⁾ Count Aehrenthal received me yesterday afternoon and I had the opportunity of having a long conversation with him on the present state of the negotiations which are being carried on between him and M. Isvolsky. I began by asking Count Aehrenthal whether he had anything to tell me as to his views with regard to the conversation held by you with Count Mensdorff, the substance of which was reported to me in your despatch No. 20 of the second instant.⁽²⁾ He replied that if he understood Count Mensdorff correctly, he gathered that you desired

⁽¹⁾ [The King and Queen of the Bulgarians left St. Petersburg on March 3. *v. Times*, March 4, 1910, p. 5. The official *communiqué* on the subject of their visit was issued in the *Rossia*, March 4, 1910. (F.O. 371/833. 7902/5684/10/44A.)]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced, as its substance is given in Sir F. Cartwright's telegram No. 16 of March 2, *v. supra*, p. 135, No. 127, and *note* ⁽³⁾.]

that the Powers should be given an opportunity of associating themselves with Austria-Hungary and Russia in making a kind of a general declaration to the effect that they were all in favour of the maintenance of the "status quo" in the Balkans. His Excellency expressed himself as somewhat sceptical as to the practical use of making such a declaration, for no one doubted that the maintenance of the "status quo" in the Balkans was the sincere desire of the Great Powers.

On my asking His Excellency whether the communication to the other Cabinets of any "agreement" which might be arrived at between Austria-Hungary and Russia would not have the good effect of removing all causes of suspicion as to the peaceful Balkan policy of those two Powers, he replied to me that there was no "agreement" to communicate. Count Aehrenthal then proceeded to explain to me his views with regard to the present state of the relations between Austria-Hungary and Russia. According to him misunderstandings had arisen between the two countries chiefly because at a critical moment there had been no Russian Ambassador here with whom he could talk matters over and thereby put things right. The result had been that for more than a year communication between St. Petersburg and Vienna had been broken off; the inconvenience of this had been felt on both sides, especially as the outlook in the Balkans had become not quite reassuring. During that time the Young Turk "régime" had had its ups and downs and Greece had been reduced to a state bordering on anarchy. M. Isvolsky—and especially M. Isvolsky, said Count Aehrenthal—had found it necessary to put an end to the unsatisfactory state of the relations between the two Empires, and little by little, in a tentative manner, a kind of conversation between Vienna and St. Petersburg had been begun. It had steadily grown in friendliness of tone during the last few weeks because M. Isvolsky soon realized that the Dual Monarchy was sincere in her desire to pursue a pacific policy in the Balkan Peninsula. Count Aehrenthal then proceeded in the following strain:—"We have now reached the point when it can be said that normal relations have been restored between the Russian and the Austro-Hungarian Cabinets, and they are now both in a position to deal in an amicable spirit with any incident or any crisis which may arise in the Near East. At this point, on the whole, I think it is perhaps better under present circumstances to stop and not to proceed further, for in practical politics the essential thing is to select the right moment for carrying a business through. It seems to me to be hardly worth while to communicate to the Powers that our relations with Russia are again normal."

Count Aehrenthal then observed that he greatly sympathised with the "détente" which has recently taken place in the relations between Great Britain and Germany, but, he went on to say, that it would never enter into his mind to expect that the British Government should communicate to him the details of what might be passing between King Edward and the German Emperor, or between their Governments. As regards M. Isvolsky's last proposals Count Aehrenthal remarked that he would reply to them in a few days, though he had not much to add to what he had already communicated to the Russian Minister.

I must add that I was considerably struck by the change of tone in which Count Aehrenthal spoke to me on this occasion of the "rapprochement" with Russia. He seems during the last week to have drawn back from his previous intention of driving the matter through to a point further than that of a mere renewal of normal relations with Russia. What has brought this about? I suspect the answer must be found in the recent visit of King Ferdinand to St. Petersburg⁽³⁾ and in the approaching visit of the King of Servia to the same capital. Count Aehrenthal in his conversation with me more than once laid stress on the harm produced by doing things—perhaps innocent in themselves—at inexpedient moments. He alluded to the Czar's visit last October to Racconigi⁽⁴⁾ as an example of what he

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 143, No. 136, note ⁽¹⁾.]

⁽⁴⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 79, No. 70, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

meant. Although Count Aehrenthal professed to know for certain that the Russian Government had turned on a jet of cold water upon the King of Bulgaria while he was at St. Petersburg, still it could not be denied, according to him, that the King, his Ministers, and the people of Bulgaria had looked upon the visit to St. Petersburg as a proof that their secret hopes and aspirations enjoyed at least the sympathy of the Russian Government. The visit of the King of Servia to Russia following so close upon that of the King of Bulgaria would produce a similar impression on the mind of the Servian people. Count Aehrenthal said to me that Austria-Hungary, being in close touch with the Balkan States, felt at once what an effect any international incident produced among them, and he could tell me that, although the Austro-Hungarian Government remained calm as regards the recent Royal movements, the effect of these visits to St. Petersburg had produced an uneasiness in Constantinople and a considerable unrest among the Balkan populations. It seemed to him that M. Isvolsky was playing with fire and that it was somewhat out of place on the one hand to declare oneself to be in favour of the maintenance of the "status quo" in the Balkans, and on the other hand to encourage visits which were undertaken with a view to obtain secret support, or at least sympathy, for aspirations which could not be realised without the breach of this very "status quo."

I asked Count Aehrenthal whether he could see his way to publish a "communiqué" in the press with regard to the state of the negotiations with Russia and the results obtained by them. He said to me that he probably would have to do so as it would be necessary to give the public some sort of idea as to what had been the aims and objects of the Vienna Cabinet in carrying on negotiations with Russia. I was, however, unable to obtain from His Excellency any clear statement as to whether he would put himself into communication with M. Isvolsky so that the "communiqués" which might appear in St. Petersburg and in Vienna should be identic.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

MINUTES.

I think Count Aehrenthal was a little unjust to M. Izvolski on the subject of the Bulgarian visit for it is pretty clear from what we have heard⁽²⁾ that King Ferdinand got nothing but counsels of moderation at St. Petersburg.

Yes—but it was very ill-timed.

H. N.

Nothing very new in this.

L. M.

C. H.
E. G.

(2) [*v. supra*, pp. 134-5, No. 126; p. 141. No. 133; *cp. infra*, p. 146, No. 138.]

No. 137.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1003.

St. Petersburg, March 15, 1910.

9092/5019/10/44A.

D. 9-15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 96.)

R. 9-30 P.M.

Austria and Russia.

M. Isvolsky tells me that he has received the reply from Count Aehrenthal,⁽¹⁾ who declines to agree to any communication being made to the Powers, and reserves

(1) [*cp. supra*, p. 141, No. 132, and *infra*, pp. 147-8, No. 139.]

the right of enlightening the public as to what has passed. I asked M. Isvolsky what he proposed to do. He said that he would consider in what form and manner he on his side could enlighten the public. I enquired whether he would concert with Vienna, as to the communiqué to be made to the public. He replied that, as Aehrenthal had made no mention of any exchange of views on this point, he presumed that each party was at liberty to take what course it thought fit. Net result was that normal relations had been re-established.

I do not think that, so far as I can judge from here, the personal relations between the two Ministers have been in the least improved, but something has been gained by the two Cabinets being able to hold intercourse with each other.

MINUTE.

M. Isvolsky seems, nevertheless, satisfied with the net result.

I. M.
C. II.
E. G.

No. 138.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 871/833.
8315/5684/10/7.
(No. 87.)
Sir,

Foreign Office, March 16, 1910.

The Russian Ambassador called here on the 8th instant and made the following communication on behalf of his Gov[ernment]⁽¹⁾ :—

À l'occasion de la visite en Russie du Roi Ferdinand et de l'arrivée prochaine du Roi Pierre quelques organes de la presse continentale, entre autres en Autriche Hongrie, s'efforcent de faire naître le soupçon que la politique russe poursuit des buts contraires au maintien du statu quo sur la Péninsule des Balkans. Ces insinuations sont dénuées de tout fondement.

Les toasts échangés à Tsarskoe et le communiqué publié au moment du départ du Roi Ferdinand établissent clairement l'esprit éminemment pacifique qui a présidé à la rencontre de l'Empereur avec le Souverain Bulgare. Le Gouv[ernement] Turc doit être pleinement fixé à cet égard. L'Ambassadeur de Russie ayant été chargé de tenir un langage excluant péremptoirement toute fausse interprétation. Nos intentions conciliatrices ne seront certainement pas mises en doute par le Cab[inet] de Vienne, au moment où le Cab[inet] Imp[érial] a fait preuve de la meilleure volonté en vue du rétablissement de relations diplomatiques amicales.

Si à l'occasion de la visite du Roi Ferdinand nous n'avons fait entendre que des paroles de sagesse et de modération, il ne pourra pas en être autrement au moment de l'arrivée du Roi de Serbie et ces deux événements ne feront certainement que contribuer au maintien de la concorde et de la paix.

I am, &c.
[E. GREY.]

MINUTE.

Query.—Record in despatch to Sir A. Nicolson [given above].

Evidently from Sir F. Cartwright's telegram No. 16⁽²⁾ the visits of the Kings of the

⁽¹⁾ [The original French text, communicated by Count Benckendorff, has been substituted here for the English translation included in Sir Edward Grey's despatch.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 142-3, No. 135. For other references to the visit of King Ferdinand, *v. supra*, pp. 134-5, No. 126; p. 141, No. 133; pp. 143-5, No. 136, and *min.*]

Bulgarians and of Servia to St. Petersburg are causing some uneasiness in Austria, though Count von Aehrenthal cannot be genuinely anxious, in view of the pacific counsels given to King Ferdinand at St. Petersburg.

A. P.
March 11, 1910.
R. P. M.
L. M.
C. H.
E. G.

No. 139.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1003.
10419/5019/10/41A.
(No. 138.)
Sir,

*St. Petersburg, D. March 17, 1910.
R. March 29, 1910.*

Monsieur Iswolsky informed me a day or two ago that he had received a reply from Count d'Aehrenthal⁽¹⁾ to his suggestion that the other Powers should be made acquainted and asked to associate themselves with the understanding arrived at between Russia and Austria-Hungary in respect to Balkan affairs. The reply had, as he had been given to anticipate, been in the negative, and Count d'Aehrenthal had added "qu'il se réserve à éclairer le public." I asked Monsieur Iswolsky what he intended to do in these circumstances. He replied that he would follow the example of Count d'Aehrenthal and also reserve to himself the right of enlightening the public. I observed that presumably he would concert with the Vienna Cabinet as to the communication to be made to the public Press, otherwise the versions might differ. His Excellency said that Count d'Aehrenthal had made no mention of any previous consultation on that point, and apparently wished to have complete liberty in the matter. He would, therefore, claim the same liberty. I remarked that this procedure was rather droll, and if the communications did not accord we might witness a fresh press campaign which would be unfortunate. I asked if he had any written records of what had passed. He replied that he had quite a voluminous dossier, and he had taken the precaution of having the *procès-verbaux* of his conversations here verified by Count Berchtold. The net results, he said, were that normal relations were established between the two Cabinets.

On a subsequent occasion he expatiated on the unjust attacks which were being made on him personally and on Russian foreign policy by influential journals in Vienna. He was told that the Vienna Foreign Office had no control over the press; but this assertion carried no weight with him as it was well known that in regard to one or two papers in any case the Ballplatz could very materially influence the tone and tenour of the articles. The clamour which had been raised over the visits of the Slav Sovereigns was doubtless caused largely by pique and disappointment, but the interpretations which had been given to the visits by the Vienna press were, as I knew, the converse of the facts. The visit of King Ferdinand and the advice given to him and his Ministers had done much towards preserving the peace,⁽²⁾ and the approaching visit of His Majesty to Constantinople, undertaken at the suggestion of Russia, afforded the best possible opportunity of placing the relations between Bulgaria and Turkey on a good and friendly footing. I told M. Iswolsky that he certainly could congratulate himself on having effected much in dissipating ill-will and suspicions on the part of Bulgaria towards Turkey, and this achievement which was of real practical utility in the cause of peace might render him indifferent to passing press polemics.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 145, No. 137. and note ⁽¹⁾.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. immediately preceding document, and note ⁽²⁾*.]

I do not know whether Monsieur Iswolsky will publish any communication as to what has passed with the Vienna Cabinet. It is possible that he may wait upon any step which may be taken by Count d'Aehrenthal. I am afraid that, in so far as can be judged from here, the recent discussions have not introduced any improvement in the personal relations between the two Foreign Ministers. The former dislike and mistrust of each other exist in full force; and I do not anticipate that these feelings, from this side in any case, will be modified; I should almost say that they have been deepened if possible by the recent attitude of Count d'Aehrenthal. Intercourse between Monsieur Iswolsky and Count Berchtold has been restored, and this intercourse may improve as time progresses. This fact is satisfactory.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTE.

Sir A. Nicolson's friendly hints have unluckily been disregarded and the communication has taken place with the result that relations are really, though not officially, more strained than ever.

H. N.
L. M.
C. H.
E. G.

No. 140.

Sir E Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Foreign Office, March 18, 1910.

Benckendorff asked me to-day what I really thought the German Note about Persia meant, and whether I agreed with Iswolsky's view that its main object was to force the hand of the Russian Government about the Bagdad Railway.⁽²⁾

I told him that the Note seemed to me exceptionally stiff. I had certainly seen nothing else like it since I came to the Foreign Office, and I could hardly think that it had the Bagdad Railway for its only objective. Its tone seemed very like the tone adopted by Germany towards France in the summer of 1905,⁽³⁾ and had Bülow been still in Office I should have been sure that the same policy was behind this Note. But Bethmann-Hollweg and Schoen were both straightforward and conciliatory. The only way in which I could reconcile what I knew of their character with the tone and contents of the Note was by supposing that what had happened was this. The German Minister at Tehran had prompted and stirred up the Berlin Foreign Office people, who had then represented to Bethmann-Hollweg that it was really too bad that the Germans after having to give way to the Russians and British in Persia, should in addition be ousted from that country by the French: especially in view of the conciliatory tone which the Germans had adopted towards the French in Morocco; the Germans should, therefore, ask for equal terms in Persia. Bethmann-Hollweg had probably said that this seemed a fair request to make, and the composition of the Note had been left to the Berlin Foreign Office.

Yours sincerely,

[E. GREY.]

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. G.P. XXVII, II, pp. 753-5, and pp. 757-9, and notes.* The text of the German note is given in *Siebert*, pp. 72-3. Further reference to the subject of the German note will be made in a later volume.]

⁽³⁾ [For this subject *v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. III, Subject Index, *sub* GERMANY, French relations with.].

No. 141.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1003.
9588/5019/10/44A.
Tel. (No. 104.)

St. Petersburg, March 20, 1910.
D. 8.35 P.M.
R. 9.20 P.M.

Austria and Russia.

Minister for Foreign Affairs communicated to me to-day copies of the documents which treat of recent discussions between the two Cabinets. They are seven in number.⁽¹⁾ In the covering memorandum Minister for Foreign Affairs states that the discussions have had the happy result of affirming the conformity of the political principles of Austria-Hungary and Russia in regard to the Balkans, and of re-establishing normal diplomatic relations between the two Governments.

Austro-Hungarian Government, in their last memorandum of the 14th March, while expressing satisfaction at the result of the discussions, do not consider it necessary to communicate them to the Powers, as such a communication would presuppose a "formal agreement" between the two Powers, and such an agreement does not enter into the views of the two Cabinets. Moreover, as the political principles of Austria have not varied, there is no new fact to be brought to the knowledge of the Powers.

Austria-Hungary gave M. Isvolsky copy of the communiqué which will be issued at Vienna to-morrow.⁽²⁾ It is short and states, he told me, that normal relations have been renewed. He told the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador that he intended to give the representatives of the Powers here copies of the documents relating to the discussions, and that he would also publish a communiqué here. He told me that his communiqué would be rather lengthy, and give the substance of what had passed.

I will look through the documents and see if there is anything in them of sufficient importance to telegraph.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 150-5, No. 143, and *encl*]

⁽²⁾ [*v. immediately succeeding document.*]

No. 142.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1003.
10147/5019/10/44A.
(No. 43.)

Vienna, D. March 21, 1910.

Sir,

R. March 24, 1910.

The following is a translation of the official Communiqué, as published in the "Fremdenblatt" of this evening, concerning the result of the negotiations between the Cabinets of Vienna and St. Petersburg:—

"We have repeatedly had occasion to occupy ourselves with the negotiations pending between Austria-Hungary and Russia and were in a position to state some time ago already that they were taking a favourable course. We saw ourselves compelled, however, to draw attention at the same time to the fact that the numerous reports which appeared in the home and foreign Press in regard to the details of these diplomatic proceedings can naturally make no claim to authenticity. In this connection it must especially be declared that neither on the part of Austria-Hungary nor on that of Russia has there ever been any intention to arrive at a formal agreement. The subject and aim of the pourparlers consisted exclusively of the question of the resumption of normal diplomatic relations between the two Powers, which renders it possible to enter at any moment on a friendly exchange of views."

"We are glad to be able to state that the object aimed at has been completely attained, and that on both sides the restoration of normal conditions between the two Empires has been greeted with satisfaction. This welcome result of the negotiations conducted by the two Cabinets, by which Austria-Hungary enters upon relations of confidence with Russia similar to her relations with the other Powers, will not fail to exercise a tranquillising influence on the situation in the Balkans, where all the Great Powers are unanimously working for the maintenance of the 'status quo.'

"The Vienna Cabinet has no grounds for communicating to the Great Powers the pourparlers conducted between the Cabinets of Vienna and St. Petersburg. Whereas the well-known principles of Austro-Hungarian policy in the Balkans have remained unaltered, no new circumstance has arisen which would give any occasion for a communication."

I have, &c.

(For the Ambassador),

A. AKERS DOUGLAS.

MINUTE

The tone of the *communiqué* is very dry

R. C. L.

24/3

H. N

L. M

No. 143.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1003.

10423/5019/10/44A.

(No. 146.)

Sir,

St Petersburg, D. March 21, 1910.

R. March 29, 1910.

Monsieur Iswolsky asked me to call upon him yesterday afternoon and on arrival at the Ministry I found the French Ambassador also in His Excellency's room. Monsieur Iswolsky said that he had requested us both to call upon him as he wished to communicate to us certain documents in regard to the discussions which had taken place between the Vienna and St. Petersburg Cabinets. He said that Count Berchtold had been with him during the day and had informed him that Count d'Aehrenthal intended to issue a *communiqué* to the Press and he had left a copy of the Austrian *communiqué*.⁽¹⁾ We understood from Monsieur Iswolsky that the *communiqué* was brief. His Excellency further informed us that he had told Count Berchtold that he would also issue a *communiqué* and would moreover communicate to the Cabinet copies of the correspondence which had passed.⁽²⁾ I do not know if Count Berchtold made any observations in regard to this step which is apparently not in accordance with the wishes of Count d'Aehrenthal. Monsieur Iswolsky said that he was aware that the procedure was a departure from usual diplomatic methods, but that he could appeal to the precedent created by Count d'Aehrenthal in December 1908 when he communicated to certain Cabinets some information of a confidential character without previous consultation with the St. Petersburg Cabinet.⁽³⁾ I recollect the incident well and it was on that occasion that Monsieur Iswolsky characterised the action of Count d'Aehrenthal as very incorrect. It is, to my mind, unfortunate that Monsieur Iswolsky may possibly have laid himself open to the same criticism.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

⁽²⁾ [For Count Berchtold's report, v. *Ö.-U.A.*, II, pp. 762-3, No. 2060. The texts of the enclosures are given in *Ö.-U.A.*, II, pp. 766-8, No. 2064, *encl.* 1-3, and 8; pp. 702-3, No. 1995, *encl.* 1; pp. 706-7, No. 2000, *encl.*; pp. 715-6, No. 2011, *encl.*; pp. 739-40, No. 2036, *encl.*]

⁽³⁾ [Reference to this incident is made in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, p. 549, *Ed. note*, and p. 559, No. 507. *cp. Ö.-U.A.*, I, pp. 677-8, No. 820.]

Count d'Aehrenthal may of course regard the action of Monsieur Iswolsky with indifference but should he take another view and resent the procedure a cloud may be cast over the amicable relations between the two Governments at the moment of their renewal. The personal relations between the two Ministers are, I fear, in any case not likely to be improved.

As to the publication in the Russian Press of a full summary of the various documents, it would, I submit, have been more prudent to have curtailed it considerably. The papers have not had time to express their opinions on them, and at this moment they are much engrossed with the Presidential crisis in the Duma.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure 1 in No. 148.

Note communicated to Sir A. Nicolson by M. Iswolski.

Ainsi qu'il résulte des pièces ci-jointes relatives aux récents pourparlers entre les Cabinets de St. Pétersbourg et de Vienne, ces pourparlers ont eu pour heureux résultat la constatation de la conformité des principes politiques existant sur le terrain des Balkans entre la Russie et l'Autriche-Hongrie et le rétablissement de relations diplomatiques normales entre les deux Gouvernements.

St. Pétersbourg le 7/20 mars 1910

Enclosure 2 in No. 148.

Dépêche de M. Iswolsky à M. Serebécw à Vienne.⁽⁴⁾

St-Pétersbourg, le 31 décembre, 1909/13 janvier, 1910.

Le Comte Berchtold est venu hier me parler pour la première fois de l'incident provoqué par l'article de la "Fortnightly Review."⁽⁵⁾ Après m'avoir exprimé combien la situation qui en est résultée lui est personnellement pénible, il me dit qu'il avait écrit à Vienne pour suggérer de me donner une satisfaction personnelle en publiant une rectification plus acceptable pour moi que celle adressée en son temps par le Comte Aehrenthal au "Nowoié Wremia" [*sic*]⁽⁶⁾. Le Comte Berchtold me pria en même temps de lui indiquer quelle serait, d'après moi, la forme à donner à une pareille rectification.

Je répondis au Comte Berchtold qu'au point de vue officiel je considérerais l'incident comme étant clos, que toute discussion ultérieure à ce sujet me semblait superflue ne pouvant que raviver une polémique nuisible aux intérêts des deux pays, mais que

⁽⁴⁾ [Summaries of this document and the other enclosures following it appeared in the *Times* on Monday, March 21, 1910, headed as follows:—

Text of the Communiqué.

St. Petersburg, March 20, (1910).

The following semi-official statement is issued here regarding Austro-Russian relations in the Balkans:—

Recent negotiations between the Cabinets of St. Petersburg and Vienna have led to satisfactory results. This exchange of views having demonstrated that in Balkan affairs there is between Russia and Austria-Hungary complete agreement in political principles, normal diplomatic relations between the two Governments have been restored. The Imperial Government has notified the other Cabinets of this fact by memorandum dated March 20, 1910, to which the following seven documents are appended.]

⁽⁵⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 109-10, No. 98. and *O.-U.A.*, II, pp. 653-6, No. 1947.]

⁽⁶⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 114, No. 108.]

j'étais prêt cependant à lui donner d'une manière toute privée mon sentiment sur la manière de sortir de la situation actuelle.

Ayant obtenu du Comte Berchtold la promesse de considérer notre conversation comme étant purement privée, je lui exposai ce qui suit :

Si je n'avais que le souci de mon honneur et de mon intérêt personnels, j'aurais dû évidemment exiger de la part du Comte Aehrenthal la déclaration formelle que l'article de la "Fortnightly Review" contenait un mensonge et une calomnie à mon égard et qu'il répudiait toute solidarité avec ce factum. Mais une pareille issue ne sauverait que mon amour-propre et ne contribuerait, hélas, nullement à détendre les rapports entre la Russie et l'Autriche. Or, c'est surtout ce dernier point qui a une importance capitale. J'avais toujours été d'avis, et je continue à être persuadé, que les questions à l'ordre du jour sur la péninsule Balcanique ne peuvent être résolues d'une manière pacifique qu'à la condition d'une bonne entente entre ces deux pays. A ce point de vue la tension actuelle des rapports Russo-Autrichiens est une source permanente de danger pour la paix générale; la situation en Macédoine, en Grèce, peut faire naître de sérieuses complications pas plus tard qu'au printemps prochain; le fil entre Pétersbourg et Vienne étant coupé, des suspicions mutuelles peuvent facilement se produire et nous amener comme au printemps passé à deux doigts de la guerre.

Il est urgent, d'après moi, de remédier à cet état de choses, et si le Comte Berchtold veut contribuer à atteindre ce but, il trouvera en moi le plus zélé collaborateur. Je suis prêt à mettre de côté tout ressentiment *personnel* et de rechercher les moyens d'amener une franche explication entre les deux Cabinets, non point sur les incidents personnels passés mais sur la *politique* à suivre dans l'avenir. Ce moyen une fois trouvé, il sera facile de revenir à des formes normales dans les relations diplomatiques entre les deux Cabinets.

Le Comte Berchtold me parut pénétré par la justesse de ces vues et me demanda s'il pouvait en référer au Comte Aehrenthal. Je lui répondis que je n'y voyais aucun inconvénient.

Enclosure 3 in No. 143.

Dépêche de M. Iswolsky à M. Sverbéew à Vienne.

St Pétersbourg,

le 23 janvier 1910/5 février 1910.

L'Ambassadeur d'Autriche-Hongrie est venu, le 19 janvier/1 février, me faire, d'ordre de son Gouvernement, une communication verbale dont voici le texte, transcrit par moi séance tenante et vérifié par le Comte Berchtold.⁽⁷⁾

"Ainsi que vous le savez, je n'avais pas manqué de rendre compte à mon Gouvernement du contenu de notre entretien de l'autre jour. Avant tout j'avais expliqué votre point de vue par rapport à la publication de la 'Fortnightly Review' en faisant valoir que vous considériez de votre droit de demander une rectification de cet article en ce qu'il avait de calomnieux et de mensonger, mais qu'en même temps vous ne refusiez pas de reconnaître les graves inconvénients qu'il y aurait à faire renaître cette controverse dans la Presse et que vous étiez disposé de (à)⁽⁸⁾ mettre de côté votre intérêt personnel dans l'intérêt de la cause. Le Comte Aehrenthal considère également qu'il serait inopportun, voire même dangereux, de revenir dans la presse sur cette publication, et d'autre part il se déclare prêt à s'entendre avec vous en vue de réponses qu'on pourrait donner à des interpellations dans les délégations et dans la Douma au sujet de cet article ainsi [que] de celui auquel il se référerait.

"En dehors de ce côté personnel, je n'avais pas non plus manqué d'informer mon Ministre de vos ouvertures sur le rétablissement éventuel d'un contact entre les deux Gouvernements. Le Comte Aehrenthal se rencontre avec vous dans l'avis que

⁽⁷⁾ [cp. *supra*, p. 114, No. 103.]

⁽⁸⁾ [This and other emendations entered in round brackets appear in pencil on the original typed copy.]

le développement normal et pacifique des affaires d'Orient ne saurait que profiter par le rétablissement d'un échange de vues entre les deux États. Un pareil contact paraîtrait d'autant plus facile à rétablir, que nous maintenons toujours les principes qui avaient été consacrés par l'accord de 1897,⁽⁹⁾ principes qui nous permettent en tout temps d'entrer en conversation avec le Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg.

“ Ces principes sont les suivants :

“ Le maintien du statu quo en Turquie aussi longtemps que les circonstances le permettront :

“ Le désintéressement réciproque dans le cas où ce statu quo venait (viendrait) à s'écrouler

“ et la politique de non-intervention dans ce dernier cas.

J'ai répondu au Comte Berchtold que je m'empresserai(s) de placer cette communication sous les yeux de Sa Majesté l'Empereur, et ne manquerai(s) pas de donner au Gouvernement Austro-Hongrois la réponse du Cabinet Impérial.

Veuillez, &c.

[ISVOLSKI.]

Enclosure 4 in No. 143.

Aide-mémoire remis par M. Iswolsky au Comte Berchtold le 27 janvier/9 février 1910.

Tout en étant d'avis qu'il serait préférable de ne plus toucher à la question de l'article de la “Fortnightly Review,”⁽⁵⁾ nous sommes prêts à nous entendre avec le Comte d'Aehrenthal pour le cas d'explications publiques à donner éventuellement à ce sujet.

Le Cabinet Impérial accueille volontiers l'idée d'un échange de vues entre les deux Gouvernements sur les principes dirigeants de leur politique balcanique; il considère cependant que dans les circonstances actuelles cet échange de vues ne pourrait plus avoir le caractère des accords de 1897 et devrait, au contraire, revêtir une forme qui permettrait d'y associer toutes les Puissances intéressées; d'autre part, en formulant les principes en question il serait nécessaire de tenir compte des récents changements survenus dans la situation politique en Turquie.

Le Cabinet Impérial propose en conséquence à celui de Vienne d'adhérer aux points suivants qui pourraient être fixés soit par un échange de dépêches, soit à l'aide d'un instrument unique, et portés ensuite à la connaissance des Puissances;

(1.) Maintien du statu quo sur la Péninsule Balcanique.

(2.) Le nouveau régime en Turquie ayant pris pour base l'égalité des droits pour toutes les populations,—maintien et consolidation du nouvel ordre de choses.

(3.) Indépendance, consolidation, et développement pacifique des petits États Balcaniques.

Enclosure 5 in No. 143.

Aide-mémoire remis à M. Iswolsky par le Comte Berchtold le 7/20 février 1910.

Nous avons appris avec satisfaction que M. Iswolsky est prêt à s'entendre avec nous sur des explications publiques à donner éventuellement au sujet des articles de la “Fortnightly Review.”

Pas plus que M. Iswolsky, nous n'avons songé à revenir par les présents pour-parlers à l'accord de 1897. En saluant avec sympathie l'initiative du Cabinet Impérial quant à un rapprochement entre les deux Gouvernements, nous nous sommes empressés de constater que nos principes politiques qui n'avaient pas changé depuis 1897 nous permettaient en tout temps de reprendre la conversation.

Dans sa réponse le Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg n'élève pas d'objections contre ces principes; de son côté il précise en trois points la formule concernant la sauvegarde

⁽⁹⁾ [The Agreement between Russia and Austria-Hungary of May 8-15, 1897, is printed in *Pribram*, Vol. I, pp. 184-95.]

du statu quo dans la Péninsule Balcanique, but vers lequel convergent donc les tendances politiques des deux Cabinets.

Actuellement le statu quo dans les Balcans ne se trouve pas menacé; il ne saurait l'être que par des désordres intérieurs ou des conflits armés entre les États de la Péninsule. Si à l'avenir de pareilles éventualités se produisent un nouvel échange de vues entre les deux Cabinets pourrait être utile; rien ne s'oppose à ce que le résultat d'un pareil échange de vues soit alors communiqué aux Puissances sous une forme qui leur permette de s'y associer.

À l'heure qu'il est, où les deux Cabinets désirent reprendre un contact politique dans les affaires d'Orient, il suffira de constater cette disposition par le moyen d'un communiqué. Dans cette publication chacun des deux Gouvernements déclarerait que l'échange de vues survenu récemment a eu un résultat satisfaisant, que les Cabinets en se donnant mutuellement connaissance des principes de leur politique ont reconnu que ces principes leur permettaient d'entrer en rapport toutes les fois que la situation dans les Balcans en démontrera l'opportunité.

Enclosure 6 in No. 148.

Aide-mémoire remis par M. Iswolsky au Comte Berchtold le 11/24 février 1910.

Ayant attentivement examiné l'aide-mémoire remis le 7/20 février par le Comte Berchtold nous constatons avec une vive satisfaction que le Gouvernement Austro-Hongrois ne fait aucune objection aux trois points formulés dans le dernier aide-mémoire du Cabinet Impérial. Il nous paraît donc acquis qu'il existe une entière conformité de principes politiques entre la Russie et l'Autriche-Hongrie sur le terrain balcanique; en nous félicitant de cet heureux résultat des pourparlers qui viennent d'avoir lieu entre les deux Cabinets, nous pensons que rien ne s'oppose désormais à la reprise entre ceux-ci de relations diplomatiques normales et le Représentant de la Russie à Vienne ne manquera pas de recevoir des instructions dans ce sens.

D'autre part, nous sommes d'avis que dans les circonstances actuelles un simple communiqué dans la forme projetée par le Cabinet de Vienne ne serait pas suffisant et que dans l'intérêt de la paix générale il serait utile d'associer dès à présent les autres Cabinets aux principes politiques professés en commun par la Russie et par l'Autriche-Hongrie afin que, si des éventualités quelconques viennent à menacer le statu quo, un échange de vues puisse promptement s'établir entre toutes les Puissances intéressées.

Dans l'espoir que le Gouvernement Austro-Hongrois voudra bien reconnaître l'esprit pacifique et conciliateur dont s'inspire le Cabinet Impérial, nous croyons devoir renouveler notre proposition de communiquer aux autres Cabinets, dans telle forme qui paraîtra la plus convenable, les points sur lesquels les deux Cabinets de St. Pétersbourg et de Vienne se trouvent déjà si heureusement d'accord.

Enclosure 7 in No. 148.

Aide-mémoire remis par le Comte Berchtold à M. Iswolsky le 1/14 mars 1910.

Le Comte Berchtold nous a transmis la réponse du Cabinet Impérial Russe à notre aide-mémoire du 6/29 février d[ernie]r.⁽¹⁰⁾ Nous partageons entièrement la satisfaction du Gouvernement Impérial de pouvoir constater la conformité des principes politiques existant sur le terrain des Balcans entre l'Autriche-Hongrie et la Russie. Aussi satisfaits de cet heureux résultat de nos pourparlers que le Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg, nous sommes, comme ce dernier, d'avis que rien ne s'oppose plus à la reprise de relations diplomatiques normales entre les deux Gouvernements. L'Ambassadeur Impérial et Royal à St. Pétersbourg se trouve déjà muni d'instructions dans ce sens.

⁽¹⁰⁾ [sic: 6/19 février is clearly intended. The date of communication was in fact 7/20 février, but the 19th appears to have been the date expected. cp. O.-U.A., II, pp. 706-7, No. 2000, encl.]

Quant à la proposition du Cabinet Impérial contenue dans son aide-mémoire remis le 27 janvier/9 février, et renouvelée dans celui du 12/25⁽¹¹⁾ février d[er]nie[r] de communiquer aux autres Cabinets les principes politiques professés par l'Autriche-Hongrie et la Russie dans les questions balcaniques, le Cabinet de Vienne estime que les raisons qui lui paraissaient plaider en faveur de la publication d'un communiqué n'ont dans l'entretemps rien perdu de leur valeur.

Une communication officielle adressée aux Puissances et les invitant à s'associer aux principes politiques de l'Autriche-Hongrie et de la Russie dans les Balkans supposerait à notre avis l'existence d'un accord formel entre ces deux Puissances; or, la conclusion d'un accord n'entre pas dans les vues des deux Cabinets. D'autre part—nos principes politiques n'ayant pas variés—aucun fait nouveau ne pourrait être à cet égard porté à la connaissance des Puissances qui d'ailleurs de leur côté n'ont pas manqué d'affirmer en toute occasion leur fidélité au principe de maintien du statu quo. Le Cabinet de Vienne estime donc que le moment actuel n'exige pas une manifestation solennelle des Puissances.

Pour résumer, nous constatons que nos pourparlers ont amené un résultat satisfaisant et heureux; les relations diplomatiques normales entre les deux Cabinets ont été reprises et il a été démontré que sur le terrain des Balkans il existe une entière conformité des principes politiques entre l'Autriche-Hongrie et la Russie. Sans insister sur l'idée d'un communiqué simultané, le Cabinet de Vienne se réserve d'éclairer l'opinion publique de la Monarchie sur le fait de la reprise du contact diplomatique avec le Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg.

Enclosure 8 in No. 143.

Télégramme de M. Iswolsky à M. Swarczew à Vienne.

St. Pétersbourg le 7/20 mars 1910.

Le Comte Berchtold m'a remis un aide-mémoire dans lequel le Cabinet de Vienne constate que nos pourparlers ont amené un résultat satisfaisant et heureux; les relations diplomatiques entre les deux Cabinets ont été reprises et il a été démontré que sur le terrain des Balkans il existe une entière conformité des principes politiques entre l'Autriche-Hongrie et la Russie. Quant à notre proposition de communiquer aux autres Cabinets les principes politiques professés par l'Autriche-Hongrie et la Russie dans les questions Balcaniques, le Cabinet de Vienne estime que le moment actuel n'exige pas une pareille manifestation et, sans insister sur l'idée d'un communiqué simultané, se réserve d'éclairer l'opinion publique de la Monarchie sur le fait de la reprise du contact diplomatique avec le Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg.

Je viens d'informer verbalement le Comte Berchtold qu'en nous félicitant de l'heureuse issue de nos pourparlers sur le fond des questions débattues, nous avons pour notre part l'intention d'informer de ce résultat les autres Cabinets et de leur communiquer la correspondance échangée avec le Cabinet de Vienne au cours de ces pourparlers.

MINUTE.

Much writing with small result.

C. H.
E. G.

⁽¹¹⁾ [sic: 11/24 février. cp. *O.-U.A.*, II, pp. 714-5, No. 2011, where the report to Vienna is dated 12/25 February.]

No. 144.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1008.
 10898/5019/10/44A.
 Tel. (No. 109.)

St. Petersburg, March 26, 1910.
 D. 8.15 P.M.
 R. 9.40 P.M.

Austria and Russia.

Austrian Ambassador has complained as to the publication of documents. M. Isvolsky replied that he was following Count von Aehrenthal's example. Austrian Ambassador observed that in 1908 Count von Aehrenthal had to defend himself. To this the rejoinder was made that a similar reason existed at present in the case of M. Isvolsky. Austrian Ambassador said that there were some rectifications to be made. M. Isvolsky said that Ambassador knew very well that in the documents there was not a word less than what had passed; that the Ambassador had seen and approved all that had been worded; and if any so-called rectifications were made whole text of documents would be published.

These bickerings are most unfortunate, and only make relations as bad as they were formerly, if not worse.

No. 145.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1008.
 11717/11717/10/44A.
 (No. 158.) Confidential.
 Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. March 26, 1910.
R. April 6, 1910.

M. Milanovitch was good enough to pay me a visit yesterday, and we had a conversation of an hour's duration. I questioned him as to his visit to Constantinople, which I understood had been of a character satisfactory to him. He said that he had spoken frankly to the Turkish Ministers, and he believed that he had convinced them of the sincere desire of Servia to maintain the best possible relations with the Ottoman Government. He had met with a cordial response from the Turkish Cabinet, and especially from Hakki Pasha, who seemed to him to be a man of enlightened and liberal views. The position of Hakki Pasha, was, however, not paramount; there was the Committee and there was, above all, the Army, not to speak of the various elements which were not friendly to the new order of things. He thought that the Committee, and, generally speaking, the leaders of the Young Turks were disposed to be too enthusiastic and too optimistic, and that they hardly appreciated the strength of the traditions and modes of thought which animated the bulk of the Moslem subjects of the Sultan. "Ottoman Nationalism" was a phrase now much in vogue but it was an abstraction. It had no real practical basis on which to found itself. The Ottomans did not form a moiety even of the Mussulman subjects in Turkey without taking into account all the Christian races. The Young Turkish leaders were mostly men who had received their education from European sources and who had adopted their ideas from the West, and they appeared to consider that they could impress on the stolid mass of the Mussulmans the new political and social principles by which they wished to govern the Ottoman State. They had, it was true, the great advantage of being well organised and active, and they had for the present the army apparently with them. It was the fashion now for all the Powers, great and small, to proclaim aloud their sympathy with the new régime; but he would question whether this sympathy, in all cases, was sincere and whole-hearted. He doubted if the present régime would really and permanently establish itself; and he was still more sceptical as to "Ottoman Nationalism" developing itself in such a manner as to embrace under one banner the

numerous and in many cases antagonistic elements which composed the heterogeneous Ottoman Empire. Although it was desirable, and indeed necessary, to assume that the new Turkish régime would gradually lay down solid foundations and to maintain good relations with the Ottoman Government, it would be prudent to quietly prepare for a possible disruption. It was with that object that he was strongly in favour of a closer union between the Balkan States.

In respect to a real confederation of the Balkan States there would be many difficulties to overcome. His more immediate aim was that the relations between Bulgaria and Serbia should become far closer and more intimate. The recent visit of the King of the Bulgarians and of his Minister to St. Petersburg had been of the happiest augury. In the first place the wise and moderating language which had been employed here had convinced the Bulgarian Government that they must lay aside for the time their aspirations and that they should show the Turkish Government that they desired peace and amity. It was dangerous to both parties, and of course to European peace, that an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust should continue to overshadow Turkey and Bulgaria. There were elements in both countries who would gladly profit by an uncertain and strained situation in order to precipitate a conflict. In the second place the desire which had been clearly manifested in St. Petersburg that Serbia and Bulgaria should gravitate towards each other would greatly facilitate the task of bringing the two countries together. The Bulgarian nation had come into the world with the San Stefano Treaty as its "acte de naissance." The prospects which that instrument had held out to the Bulgarians would not easily be effaced from their minds, and their political aspirations must almost of necessity tend towards some day realising its provisions. At the same time it was most desirable that the smaller Balkan States should keep together. Alone they were individually of minor importance, but united they would form a factor which no Power could easily ignore. He had spoken at length with King Ferdinand on the subject, and he had found His Majesty more reasonable and less Quixotic perhaps than his Ministers. The King was a man who grasped realities, and though, if he had received encouragement during his recent visit to this capital he would quite possibly have been disposed to embark on an adventurous policy, he had, after carefully sounding the ground, seen that for the present he must shorten sail and steer a safe and reasonable course. The interviews of Gen[era]l Paprikoff were studied indiscretions, Ballons d'essai flown to test Russian public opinion, and they had been accorded, M. Milanovitch was sure, with the express authority of the Bulgarian Sovereign. Their reception had shown that in Russia the sentiments expressed by General Paprikoff found no favour.

A closer union between the Balkan States would naturally be unfavourably viewed by Austria-Hungary and Germany, whatever might be official or semi-official utterances to the contrary. The policy of the Vienna Cabinet was to keep Serbia and Bulgaria apart; and perhaps Austria would not even be unwilling to hold out eventually some tantalising proposals to Serbia. He had told King Ferdinand that the Servian Government considered that the best and the only wise policy both for Serbia and for Bulgaria lay in close relations, but if this were unattainable, then "la moins mauvaise politique" for Serbia would be to march hand in hand with Austria. King Ferdinand had assumed a reflective mood on this statement. M. Milanovitch was desirous of observing a correct and friendly but cautious attitude towards Austria-Hungary. He himself was not dazzled by the reputed statesmanlike qualities of Count d'Aehrenthal, and he had no implicit confidence in him. Count d'Aehrenthal had not achieved any brilliant results; and the results which he had obtained had been secured with more trouble, more risk and greater expense than a more capable statesman would have necessarily incurred. Moreover he was under the impression that Count d'Aehrenthal was basing his policy in the South East of Europe on a great mistake. Count d'Aehrenthal had left St. Petersburg when Russia was still suffering from the effects of the Japanese war and the internal revolution, and he apparently thought that this country was a negligible factor for some years to come. No greater error could be committed. It was unquestionable that the recovery of Russia had been rapid and

surprising, and he had been assured, and he believed the assurances, that in two or three years she would be stronger than she had ever been.

M. Milanovitch said that M. Iswolsky had supplied him with copies of the documents relating to the recent discussions between Austria and Russia. He had perused them with great interest, and it was curious to note the endeavours of Count d'Aehrenthal to lead Russia into agreeing to reserving Balkan affairs to a discussion à deux. He had not been able to induce M. Iswolsky to follow him, and it was evident that Russia wished to "europeanise" all Balkan questions, and not keep them within the special domain of Austria and Russia. M. Milanovitch was convinced that Austria had still as her ultimate aim an advance to Salonica. Whether she would ever be able to realise it was another question, but he did not attach undue importance to the declarations of the Vienna Cabinet in favour of a maintenance of the status quo. Such was undoubtedly the proper policy to pursue for the present, as the moment was not favourable either from an international or from an internal point of view for Austria to dream of any aggressive policy.

The sum and substance of the views of M. Milanovitch were, so far as I could gather: 1. That the permanency of the new Turkish regime was not assured. 2. That for the present it would be wise for the Balkan States to be on the best possible terms with Constantinople and to endeavour to smooth over all questions in an amicable and peaceable spirit. 3. That it was eminently desirable that a close intimacy should be established between Serbia and Bulgaria. 4. Correct and friendly relations should be maintained with Austria-Hungary. and 5. That Russia was at present and would be still more in the future a most powerful factor in the South East of Europe.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 146.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 871/1008.

10505/5019/10/44.

(No. 88.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 29, 1910.

The Austro-Hungarian Amb[assado]r called at the Foreign Office on the 23rd inst[ant] and informed Sir C. Hardinge that he had received a telegram from Count Aehrenthal relating to the Russian communiqué on the Austro-Russian negotiations.⁽²⁾

Count Aehrenthal had received the Russian Chargé d'Affaires and had pointed out to him the unusual nature of M. Iswolsky's communiqué as being at variance with recognised diplomatic procedure. He took no exception to the publication of the documents beyond that, as published, they contained some inaccuracies, but he reminded the Russian Chargé d'Affaires that he had communicated to M. Iswolsky the text of the Austrian communiqué before it was published, while M. Iswolsky had abstained from taking a similar course, and had published confidential documents without his permission or approval.

Count Aehrenthal also told Count Mensdorff that he would speak in the same sense to the Representatives of the other Powers.

I am, &c.

[E. GREY.]

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 105) on March 30.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp 150-5, No. 143, and *encls.*, and *note* ⁽⁴⁾.]

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1003.
11282/5019/10/44A.
(No. 46.)
Sir,

Vienna, D. March 31, 1910.

R. April 4, 1910.

I have the honour to report that Count Aehrenthal left Vienna for Abbazia on the day following the publication of the Austrian communiqué⁽¹⁾ on the subject of the negotiations between this country and Russia, and that His Excellency has not as yet returned to the Austrian capital. The absence of the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister at this moment has given rise to much comment, and it is generally interpreted to mean that he wishes to avoid being questioned as to his views with regard to the Russian communiqué which has appeared on the same subject.⁽²⁾ There can be but little doubt that Count Aehrenthal does not really approve of M. Isvolsky's action in giving publicity to confidential documents relating to the recent negotiations, but it is evident that it does not suit Count Aehrenthal to show that he has been annoyed by what M. Isvolsky has done, in the first place because to do so would no doubt give much satisfaction to the Russian Minister, and secondly because Count Aehrenthal is determined to do nothing which will jeopardize the improved relations which now exist between Austria-Hungary and Russia. The "mot d'ordre" has therefore gone out to the Austro-Hungarian press to draw as little attention as possible to M. Isvolsky's indiscretion and to take the line that if the latter chose to commit a breach of international etiquette, the fault must entirely lie with him. The press here, moreover, has been instructed to point out that by the publication of the documents in question no real harm has been done to the Austro-Hungarian Government, as the perusal of these documents will only prove to the world how peaceful and straightforward is the policy which the Vienna Cabinet pursues in the Near East.

It is generally believed here that the publication of the confidential documents by M. Isvolsky was intended by him to act as a "coup de théâtre" which would redound to his greater glory; for this reason, probably Count Aehrenthal has done his best, by encouraging the silence of the Austro-Hungarian press with regard to this publication, to make the Russian "coup de théâtre" fall as flat as possible. What Count Aehrenthal sincerely desired by the negotiations with Russia was to remove the cloud which had hung for so long over the relations between the two countries, and this object he appears to have attained. He is a statesman who works for definite objects and he will not allow himself to be irritated by any side-issues of little real importance in themselves which M. Isvolsky may raise. When the Czar on his journey to Racconigi⁽³⁾ deliberately avoided passing through Austrian territory, Count Aehrenthal made no official complaint and remained silent; he remained equally silent when the King of Bulgaria, after having stayed several days incognito in Vienna without attempting to see the Emperor Francis Joseph, started from here on a visit to St. Petersburg.⁽⁴⁾ When the King of Servia followed in the same path, Count Aehrenthal merely shrugged his shoulders, and when M. Isvolsky finally publishes the confidential documents of the recent negotiations without having first obtained permission from the Austro-Hungarian Government to do so, Count Aehrenthal avoids indulging in useless recriminations and leaves for Abbazia, as if for the moment there were nothing worth occupying his attention at the "Ballplatz," and his press organs remain practically mute on political matters, filling their pages with descriptions of the pleasing custom of making presents of Easter eggs at this season of the year.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 149-50, No. 142.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 150-5, No. 143, and *encls.*, and *note* (4).]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 79, No. 70, and *note* (1).]

⁽⁴⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 184, No. 126, and *note* (2).]

It may be worth while reporting to you what I have been able to discover with regard to the actual genesis of the publication of the Austrian and Russian communiqués. On Friday, the 18th instant, I met M. de Sverbéeff, the Russian Chargé d'Affaires, at an evening party at the Duke of Cumberland's. I said to him on that occasion that I had seen Count Aehrenthal on the previous day and that from the language His Excellency had held to me I gathered that he considered that the moment was close at hand when he would be compelled to communicate something to the public as to the negotiations which had been going on between Vienna and St. Petersburg, in other words, I said to M. de Sverbéeff that in my opinion Count Aehrenthal intended to stop the conversation with the Russian Government at the point which had then been reached, and that he would lose no time in announcing this fact to the public. I thought it well that M. Isvolsky should be warned of this, and that he should make a final effort to induce Count Aehrenthal to come to an understanding with him as to what the public should be told, so as to avoid undesirable press polemics should the two communiqués be worded differently from each other. M. de Sverbéeff agreed with me, and promised to telegraph to M. Isvolsky on the subject. It appears that on the afternoon of the following day (Saturday), M. de Sverbéeff received a message from Count Aehrenthal asking him to come at once to the "Ballplatz." On his reaching the Austrian Foreign Office, the Russian Chargé d'Affaires was informed that the Austrian communiqué would appear in the newspapers on Monday evening following. Count Berchtold, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at St. Petersburg, it was added, had just been instructed to inform M. Isvolsky of this fact. M. de Sverbéeff telegraphed the above information to St. Petersburg the same night. M. Isvolsky got the telegram on Sunday morning, and it appears to have come to him as a surprise, as M. de Sverbéeff tells me that no preliminary text for the Russian communiqué had as yet been drafted. Count Aehrenthal's precipitate action necessitated the immediate publication of a Russian communiqué, and M. Isvolsky, irritated at having his hands forced by his rival, appears suddenly to have decided to publish a series of confidential documents which related to the negotiations. His intention to do so, M. de Sverbéeff tells me, was communicated to Count Berchtold on Sunday afternoon, and this did not give sufficient time to obtain the approval of the Austro-Hungarian Government to their publication.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

No. 148.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, April 6, 1910.

Many thanks for your letter of March 18.⁽²⁾ The German note⁽³⁾ undoubtedly caused a fluttering of hearts at the Foreign Office here, and considerable annoyance; but it has impressed most deeply on Iswolsky the necessity of keeping in the closest possible touch with us. Louis, the French Ambassador, tells me that he finds both Iswolsky and his assistant Sazonow most emphatic on that point. The German note is an instance of what might occur to us if our position were seriously weakened. Iswolsky is afraid lest the Germans should acquire a railway concession without our knowledge—from Barclay's despatch No. 45⁽⁴⁾ the ways of the Mejliss

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 148, No. 140.]

⁽³⁾ [*op. G.P. XXVII*, II, pp. 753-5, and pp. 757-9 and *notes*; also *Siebert*, pp. 72-3.]

⁽⁴⁾ [Not reproduced. Material relating to the question of Persian railways will be printed in a later volume.]

seem occult and mysterious—and an accomplished fact be suddenly sprung upon us. I dare say this is possible. He puzzles his brains as to what is really behind the German move. It is easy to lose oneself in speculations on that subject, and it would be well to await further developments if any come. He has carefully kept from the press any information as to the German communication, and herein he is wise, as there would be a stormy outburst were the facts known. Two severe admonitions in a twelvemonth would upset the equanimity of the public here. I cannot understand why Berlin frames her communications in the Prussian drill-sergeant style, and thereby cause[s] irritation and alarm. I have no doubt she is very anxious to wean Russia from our side, but her rough wooing is not the best method, and the object of her affections is not likely to be won by being taken by the ears and well shaken. Iswolsky is proceeding on a few weeks holiday, and Sazonow will be in charge. This arrangement is not unsatisfactory. If the Germans continue their conversation here I would prefer that they dealt with Sazonow. He is not so timid as his chief, and is more open and franker. I do not for one moment doubt the loyalty of Iswolsky towards us, but one of his peculiarities is an inability to tell one everything. He is constitutionally “cachotier” and I had some difficulty in obtaining from him the full text of the German Note. I think his position here is stronger than it was, and the attitude he has assumed in regard to Balkan policy has been well received.

Y[ou]rs sincerely,
A. NICOLSON.

No. 149.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1009.
14012/14012/10/44A.
(No. 194.)
Sir,

*St. Petersburg, D. April 15, 1910.
R. April 25, 1910.*

In connection with Balkan matters The Emperor, during my audience this morning, remarked that the visits of King Ferdinand and of King Peter to St. Petersburg had proved to be of great service to the cause of peace. King Ferdinand had arrived here full of forebodings as to Turkish aims and policy and had evidently wished to enlist the sympathy of Russia in any steps which he might think it desirable eventually to adopt in defence of the interests of the Bulgarian population in Macedonia. He had received most salutary advice during his stay here, and it had been impressed upon him that the Russian Government had no reason to believe that the Sublime Porte was otherwise than anxious to prosecute a pacific policy in Macedonia. King Ferdinand had been strongly urged to pay a visit himself to Constantinople,⁽¹⁾ and now that he had been there his views had evidently undergone a complete transformation, as he had informed M. Tcharykoff that he had satisfied himself that his previous appreciation of the Turkish attitude had been quite erroneous, and that there was no cause for any uneasiness. This was a great admission for King Ferdinand to make. The Emperor said, with a smile, that King Ferdinand was exceedingly adroit, and that it was difficult to gauge what was in his mind. His Majesty asked if King Ferdinand had spoken to me on politics. I gave His Majesty a short summary of the two conversations which I had had with King Ferdinand, and said that on the second occasion I presumed that the advice which he had received was producing an effect as he had whispered to me that he had now become “very tame.”

The Emperor observed that in regard to King Peter it had been unnecessary to exert any amicable pressure to be prudent and moderate as His Majesty was quite

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. infra*, p. 182, No. 161; p. 183, *Ed. note.*]

disposed to adopt that line. The Emperor said that he hoped that His Majesty's Government understood that Russia had done nothing but give pacific and moderating advice, and had not endeavoured to promote any intrigues for her own ends in the Balkans. I assured His Majesty that my Government had not the shadow of a doubt that Russia had worked for the cause of peace, and I thought that the results conclusively proved that the visits of the two Balkan Sovereigns both to St. Petersburg and to Constantinople had greatly contributed to tranquillity in the Near East. His Majesty said that he wished that everyone else took the same view, but in some places they were not so reassured. I enquired if His Majesty alluded to Vienna. The Emperor laughed and said that as I had mentioned it he would not deny that he had Vienna in his mind, and it was unfortunate that the Austrian press⁽²⁾ had endeavoured to place a wrong interpretation on what had passed here.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

(²) [*cp. supra*, p 146, No. 138.]

No. 150.

Mr. Findlay to Sir C. Hardinge

Private and Confidential.⁽¹⁾

My dear Hardinge,

Sofia, May 11, 1910, 6 P.M.

I am suffering from moral exhaustion after an hour's conversational fencing with King Ferdinand. Please read this letter in connection with my telegram Private of today.⁽²⁾

King Ferdinand drove up unannounced and found me busy with the Messenger.

His Majesty said he had come in the first place to express personally his condolences on the death of King Edward.

I thanked His Majesty in suitable terms. His Majesty then said He had disagreeable and delicate subjects to discuss with me. He proceeded as follows.

"You know that my relations with King Edward were frequently strained. I think His Majesty was often unjust to me. We had three serious differences. Once when King Edward scolded me for not being on good terms with Austria. I was brought up in Austria; I know every ramification of Austrian politics, and did not require to be told that it was advisable for me to be on good terms with the Austrian Emperor."

I told His Majesty, as I had done before, that I only knew in a general way that King Edward and He had had differences of opinion; that to me King Edward had always spoken of His Majesty in a friendly manner (which is true) and I ventured to suggest that it was a pity *now* to discuss old quarrels which—as far as I knew—had never been so bitter on King Edward's side as His Majesty appeared to imagine.

His Majesty replied that he had an object in laying the whole case before me. He continued:

"At Marienbad, (I do not know the date), King Edward told me I had no business to have visited King Peter of Servia; that my conduct in this matter was unworthy of a Coburg. King Peter was a neighbour with whom it was necessary for me to be on good terms. But the King would not listen to what I had to say."

"Again, King Edward chose to believe that when the independence of Bulgaria was declared, I was acting in collusion with Austria, and would not believe me when I asserted the contrary. Politics were never mentioned during my visit to Pesth, and I never discuss politics with M. d'Aerenthal."

(¹) [Hardinge MSS., Vol. II of 1910.]

(²) [Not reproduced. It reported the arrival of King Ferdinand, and the conversation with Mr. Findlay, which is described more fully above, and asked for instructions. (Hardinge MSS., Vol. II of 1910.)]

"I had a sincere admiration for King Edward, and my first impulse on receiving the news of His Majesty's death was to propose to attend His funeral in Person. But seeing what our relations have been, and especially in view of a statement made by your Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Lindley, in conversation with a high Court Official to the effect that "*Le Roi Edouard ne pouvait pas me sentir, et qu'une visite de ma part en Angleterre ne serait pas bienvenue*," I felt a delicacy in making a proposal which might be unwelcome to King George, and might even expose me to a rebuff."

"I have now," concluded King Ferdinand, "told you like an honest man, the whole state of the case. My Council of Ministers wish me to go to England. I am willing and glad to go if I can be sure of a good reception. I ask you to tell me frankly what I should do."

I replied that before considering this delicate question, on which I did not feel competent to offer advice, I would beg His Majesty to listen to my observations on what He had been pleased to tell me.

In the first place I ventured to think that there must be a complete misunderstanding as to the statement attributed to Mr. Lindley when acting as Chargé d'Affaires during my absence, i.e., between the beginning of November and the end of January. There never had been, as far as I knew, any question of His Majesty's visiting England during that period. Mr. Lindley could consequently have had no such communication to make. It was obvious that Mr. Lindley would not, and could not, have gratuitously made such a statement, on such a delicate subject, to a Court Official. Was it possible that my name had been confused with Mr. Lindley's? I had recently had two conversations with H[is] M[ajesty]'s Private Secretary M. Dobrovitch. But the question of a visit had never been mentioned.

King Ferdinand replied that Dobrovitch was not the Official in question, but avoided saying who it was. (Lindley assures me that he has never discussed the question of a visit with any "Court official"). I repeated my conviction that, owing to some misunderstanding, His Majesty must have been misinformed, and begged Him to put the statement attributed to Mr. Lindley aside, as I was sure it could have never been made. With His Majesty's permission I would pass on to the accusation which His Majesty appeared to resent so much, that at the time of the declaration of Bulgarian Independence He had acted in collusion with Austria. I was prepared to admit that there had been misunderstandings at that time. A conversation had taken place between two political personages in the course of which one of them, who was in [a] position to know, made a statement, the logical deduction from which was that Bulgaria and Austria were acting according to preconcerted arrangement. His Majesty pressed me for the names, place and date, adding "Whoever said that lied"—I replied that I did not feel at liberty to go into details. I could only say that the statement in question had not been made either in Bulgaria or in Austria. I did not regard it as an intentional lie—the stupidity or vanity of many men exceeded their mendaciousness. I attributed it to one of the former, but it was calculated, on account of its apparent honesty, to deceive the very elect, and might possibly have deceived even King Edward for a time. I could, however, assure His Majesty that I was certain that this misunderstanding had been cleared up, and that for many months past King Edward had not believed that Austria and Bulgaria had acted in collusion at the time in question. (I hope you will not think I went too far in alluding vaguely to Khevenhueller's statement to Pichon.⁽³⁾ I am certain King Ferdinand knows all about it. Paléologue is certain to have told Him.)

I then said I would repeat to King Ferdinand the words King Edward had used to me at an audience immediately after my appointment to Sofia. His Majesty had said "King Ferdinand and I have had our differences of opinion, but we are now quite on good terms. King Ferdinand is my near relation. He is clever, witty and an interesting personality. I hope that you will get on with Him." The last time that

(3) [*cp. supra*, pp. 129-30, No. 118.]

I had had the honour of an Audience with King Edward, His Majesty had entrusted me with a friendly message which I had lately had the honour to deliver. I could not therefore see why King Ferdinand should imagine that our late King had regarded him with such inveterate bitterness. I could not offer His Majesty any advice on the delicate question He had put to me. It appeared to me that His Majesty must judge by what His own feelings had been, and by the terms on which He stood with our present Sovereign, of which I was entirely ignorant.

King Ferdinand then repeated His admiration for King Edward, stated that His relations with King George had been uniformly friendly, insisted on the advantage to Great Britain of having a friend—in His Person—in the Balkans, and professed his desire to renew and to establish permanently friendly relations with the Royal Family of England.

After some consideration His Majesty then asked me to telegraph His proposal to attend the funeral. I said I would do so, and at once sent off the private telegram above-mentioned.⁽⁴⁾

King Ferdinand then questioned me as to how questions of precedence would be arranged at the Funeral, whether alphabetically, according to seniority or according to degrees of relationship. I was unable to enlighten His Majesty on this subject. King Ferdinand also referred to the wretched paragraph in "*Modern Society*," mentioned in my last letter,⁽⁴⁾ as showing the prejudice against him in England. I said the paper in question was absolutely beneath the attention of His Majesty.

After talking pleasantly for a few minutes King Ferdinand took his leave, again pressing me to do what I could to establish good relations between himself and our Royal Family. I replied that I was naturally anxious to do so. On the doorstep His Majesty begged me to obtain an early answer, so as to give him time to make necessary arrangements.

This is a condensed, but in the principal parts, textual report of this rather trying conversation. I am afraid it is long, but I think it is absolutely necessary that you should know practically all that passed.

I think it is quite possible that the Council of Ministers has been pressing King Ferdinand to go to England. The visit "which he owed me" was possibly a result of that pressure. But it has been paid, and the discussion—though painful and disagreeable—was conducted by King Ferdinand in courteous terms. I do not know whether His Majesty's presence will be welcome; but I cannot see any way of preventing King Ferdinand from going without an open quarrel. I venture to think that this would be undesirable in the public interest.

As regards the statement attributed to Lindley, I wish again to express my opinion that it is either a very gross and intentional exaggeration on the part of someone unknown, or that the story was intended to represent what King Ferdinand has read between the lines in my recent conversations with His Majesty and Dobrovitch, which I have reported fully.⁽⁵⁾ In these conversations, though they continually turned round the question of a visit to England, the subject was never even mentioned. I have entire confidence that Lindley never made any such statement to a Court Official.

Excuse the interminable length of this letter.

Y[ou]rs ever,

M. DE C. FINDLAY.

⁽⁴⁾ [Not reproduced. It is dated April 25, 1910, and refers primarily to the possibility of a visit by King Ferdinand to England. It supplements Mr. Findlay's despatch No. 57 mentioned in the immediately succeeding note, and refers to a conversation with M. Dobrovitch in the course of which Mr. Findlay was shown a cutting from *Modern Society* referring to King Ferdinand. (Hardinge MSS., Vol. II of 1910.)]

⁽⁵⁾ [Mr. Findlay had a conversation with the King of the Bulgarians on April 24, which was reported in his despatch No 57 of April 25 (F.O. 14948/14948/10/7). No official report of the conversation with M. Dobrovitch has not been traced.]

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/955.

17367/8445/10/44A.

(No. 139.) Confidential.

Sir,

Berlin, D. May 13, 1910.

R. May 17, 1910.

I have the honour to inform you that the Imperial Chancellor asked me to call upon him yesterday evening, unfortunately before the arrival of the Messenger. His Excellency told me that as he supposed that I should shortly be going to London he was anxious that I should be in a position to explain to you his views with regard to the present phase of the Persian question.⁽¹⁾ As, in obedience to the King's commands, I am to have the honour of being present at the Funeral of Our Late Sovereign, I hope, by an early arrival in London to have an opportunity of laying those views before you.

Shortly they are to the following effect: that the Imperial Government are sincerely desirous not to find themselves forced to complicate matters by having to make representations to the Persian Government with regard to the most favoured nation treatment which they enjoy under their Treaty with Persia. Such representations will however, His Excellency says, inevitably have to be made should the Persian Government give the assurances now being pressed for by the Governments of Great Britain and Russia, before an understanding is arrived at between Germany and the two Governments. It was for this reason that he had been so anxious that the present British and Russian action should be stopped or at all events delayed. I said to His Excellency that I was sure he would readily understand that having taken that action in hand it would never do for the two Governments now to withdraw from the position they had taken up. His Excellency said that he fully recognized the difficulty of doing so, but in view of the reasons he had given to me and in order to prevent a step which would make a subsequent understanding in Persian, or, indeed any other, affairs a thousand times more difficult, if not impossible, he hoped that His Majesty's Government would see their way to immediate negotiations for an understanding on Persian affairs on the lines which had been indicated to them, so that the understanding could be published simultaneously with, if not before, the assurances which were now being pressed for from the Persian Government.

Otherwise he would, to his great regret, be forced by Public Opinion to take the step of recalling to the Persian Government their Treaty obligations to Germany. He begged me to impress upon you most strongly that this was a step which he was sincerely anxious to avoid.

The Chancellor spoke with great emphasis and seemed really perturbed at the idea that he might be obliged by circumstances to take a step which would endanger his policy of friendliness towards Great Britain and throw fresh obstacles in the way of a general political understanding between the two countries. I propose to reserve His Excellency's remarks on this head until my arrival in London.

As an indication of the interest which is beginning to be felt in Germany with regard to the commercial and economic development of Persia, I may mention that the "*Kölnische Zeitung*" of May 11th publishes a telegram from its Teheran correspondent stating that the Representative of the Deutsche Bank is about to leave for Berlin, after having passed several weeks in Teheran for the purpose of studying economic conditions in Persia.

The correspondent announces that it is being generally rumoured that a decision is now imminent with regard to the participation of German capital in Persia. He adds that in political circles in that country great hopes are being built on the outcome of these negotiations and that the expectation is entertained that Germany's participa-

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. Gooch & Temperley, Vol. VI, pp. 479-85, Nos. 362-9.*]

tion in the commercial opening up of Persia will contribute largely towards extricating her from her present financial embarrassments.

The message concludes with the words: "It is urgently desirable that Germany should not fail to make use of this opportunity to get a footing here and to secure herself for the future a valuable market."

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

MINUTES.

This despatch confirms the view that the German Gov[ernmen]t are taking this line either because they are afraid that they will be attacked at home for not defending German interests with sufficient zeal or because they wish us to believe that they are being urged by public opinion to take this line.

The Chancellor wishes an immediate agreement about Persia on the lines already laid down by him, to be published at the same time as, or even before, the assurances for which we are now pressing the Persian Gov[ernmen]t. If this is not done Germany will send what is practically an ultimatum to Persia.

On the other hand we have decided that we cannot withdraw from our position and have nearly settled on a formula for our reply to the enquiry of the Persian Gov[ernmen]t as to the precise meaning of our demands.

If the German Gov[ernmen]t are really serious this looks very like an *impasse* but there is a very good chance that they are only bluffing.

We are not bound to answer them at once—certainly not till after the Secretary of State has conferred with Sir E. Goschen.

Meanwhile, we might telegraph the substance of this despatch to Sir A. Nicolson for the information of the Russian Gov[ernmen]t.

(If Germany insists on making an arrangement with us about Persia where she has no claim to a special position, we might urge that the other Powers who are on the same footing as Germany ought to be parties to it. otherwise we create for Germany a special position to which the others might reasonably object.)

H. N.

May 17, 1910.

No action seems necessary. The arrangement which they have proposed about Persia is one sided and the threat harmless.

L. M.

C. H.

This ground is covered by my last conversation with Count Metternich of which I telegraphed a summary to Sir A. Nicolson yesterday.⁽²⁾

I have also seen Sir E. Goschen today.

E. G.

18 5 10.

(2) [*v. infra*, pp 168-9, No. 153.]

No. 152.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/955.

17622/8445/10/44A.

(No. 68.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. May 14, 1910.

R. May 17, 1910.

I have the honour to report that I saw Count Aehrenthal to-day, and that in the course of the conversation I had with him I alluded to the Persian question. Count Aehrenthal assumed the attitude that the Persian question interested him but very little; he said that he was watching it merely as an outsider; he was entirely impartial with regard to it—he was neutral. I said to him that the German

Government did not appear to view the matter as calmly as His Excellency did, and as Germany was the ally of Austria-Hungary it seemed to me that the Persian question, if allowed to remain unsolved, was likely to affect the Dual Monarchy very considerably. Count Aehrenthal replied that the Persian question only really interested him if it should unfortunately be transferred from being a local question in distant Asia to being a European question of the first magnitude. He hoped that it would never acquire such dimensions, and he expressed his confidence that the diplomatic wisdom of Great Britain, Russia and Germany combined would find a solution for what after all appeared to him to be a matter of secondary importance. I said to His Excellency that Germany seemed to me to be somewhat too exacting in her demands for a settlement of the Persian question. Count Aehrenthal observed that Germany was merely looking after her own interests, and that every nation tried to get as big a slice of the pudding as she possibly could. He seemed to imply that the whole Persian question was merely one of give and take, and that eventually both sides would have the common sense to moderate their aspirations. His Excellency did not think that any sane person wished to bring about a conflict for the sake of Persia, and certainly Austria-Hungary did not desire to see such a conflict arise as her own interests in Persia were quite insignificant. Count Aehrenthal's advice was that Great Britain and Germany should meet each other half way and come to a settlement of their respective interests in Persia in an amicable manner, opening thereby the way to a reconciliation between them all along the line. I said to Count Aehrenthal that the interests of Great Britain and Russia in Persia were quite peculiar and differed from those of other nations. We both were great Asiatic Powers and Persia lay between our respective territories, and we could not be indifferent as to the foreign political influences which might be developed in the near future in that country. We did not desire to exclude other nations from having legitimate trade with Persia; we were for the "open door" in the true sense of that word, but we and Russia were especially opposed to the granting of concessions of political importance to third parties without our being consulted in the matter. That we sincerely desired to maintain the independence and the integrity of Persia was clear enough for it was by our efforts that Persia had been saved from breaking up owing to the misgovernment of her rulers. If we had wanted to deal a blow at the integrity of Persia we could have done so over and over again; that we had not done so must be put down to our credit, and other nations must bear this fact in mind and not assume that because Persia was technically independent they were at liberty to misuse her rights of independence, merely to create difficulties for the two Powers which had supreme interests in that part of the world. I pointed out to Count Aehrenthal that if Russia were suddenly to bring pressure to bear at Constantinople to obtain from the Porte concessions for the construction of purely political railways in Albania, or to obtain a concession to create a commercial port on the Albanian coast—which might afterwards serve as a Russian naval base—both Italy and the Dual Monarchy, with Germany at their back, would use all their diplomatic thunder at Constantinople to protest against such concessions being granted to a Power which had no legitimate interests in Albania to look after. Count Aehrenthal replied that he certainly would object if Russia began to show too great an interest in Albania, but as regards Persia he stated that he could understand that Germany with her ever increasing population could not allow distant markets to be closed to her without making an effort to keep them open. His Excellency talked a good deal about the sovereign rights of independent States but he did this in a rather languid manner as if he did not know what arguments to use in defence of Germany's recent action in Persia. At this point Count Aehrenthal made an observation which is worth recording:—on my repeating to him that the freedom of commerce of all nations would run no real risks of being interfered with if the Persian Government gave Great Britain and Russia the guarantees asked for by these two Powers with regard to the granting of concessions, Count Aehrenthal confessed to me that he would be perfectly satisfied if an assurance to this effect were given to him by Great Britain, but that he would not feel the same confidence if such an assurance were given to him

by Russia. He declared that if no railways were to be built in Northern Persia except with the consent of Russia, it meant that Russia would allow none to be constructed but such as would connect with railway lines in the Caucasus; in other words Russia could and would throttle any foreign trade which passed through that province on its way to Persia, that was where Austro-Hungarian interests were touched for her trade could only reach Persia through the Caucasus, where its passage was already impeded by every kind of restriction. For this reason, Count Aehrenthal said, Austria-Hungary sympathized with Germany's action with regard to Persia: nevertheless, he gave me to understand that he would deeply regret if the Persian question were to cause the renewal of bad blood between Great Britain and Germany. He admitted that of course Great Britain and Russia had one simple way of settling the Persian question, and that was to walk in and to divide Persia, or at least to deprive her of absolute independence. However, if we acted in this way and rode rough-shod over German interests and sentiment, we would produce, said Count Aehrenthal, a most deplorable situation in Europe which he hoped the wisdom and the common sense of the rulers and the statesmen of Great Britain, Russia and Germany would spare us from. His Excellency concluded by saying that all the Great Powers were sincerely animated by the desire of maintaining the peace of the world and that he felt confident that this peace could be secured by the opposing parties examining the matters in dispute in a spirit of moderation and common sense.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

MINUTES.

Sir F. Cartwright puts our point of view admirably. It is clear that Count Aehrenthal disapproves of Germany's action and will not support the German Government; which accounts for the anxiety of the Germans to come to terms and for the volte face which they have recently made.

This should encourage us to hold out.

It might be as well to telegraph a summary of this to Sir A. Nicolson?⁽¹⁾

L. M.

L. M.
C. H.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [A telegram was sent to St. Petersburg (No. 254) on May 21; to Berlin (No. 38); to Tehran (No. 161).]

No. 153.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/955.

17792/8445/10/44.

Tel. (No. 244.)

Foreign Office, May 17, 1910, 8.45 P.M.

I have told German Ambassador⁽²⁾ what Persian Government have promised about new Loans in answer to our note of April 7⁽³⁾ and have said we must certainly hold them to this.

As to concessions I have said that Persian Government have asked what we meant and that we are now considering what we should say but that the least we could say was that concessions for means of communication harbours etc. must not be given to foreigners without our having an opportunity of seeing that our strategical and political interests were not endangered and of safeguarding them. I said that

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Berlin (No. 34); to Tehran (No. 155), to Vienna (No. 26).]

⁽²⁾ [cp G.P. XXVII, II, pp. 794-5.]

⁽³⁾ [Reference to the subject of this note will be made in a later volume.]

this did not seem to me to justify any protest by Germans at Teheran, and recalling what Ambassador had said about protesting at Teheran I said that if Persians confronted us with fait accompli of a concession to a third party endangering our strategical or political interests we on our side should not only protest strongly at Teheran but take whatever measures in Persia we thought necessary to safeguard our interests.

I pointed out however to Ambassador that until we did something to exclude Germans or they obtained a concession damaging to us question did not become urgent as he had represented.

I said I could not make agreement about Persia unless it included Bagdad Railway question.

Ambassador had no further communication to make except that Germans had indications of prospect of progress with negotiations at St. Petersburg.

Repeated to Teheran, Berlin, Vienna.

No. 154.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/827.

20925/20925/10/3.

(No. 77.) Very Confidential.

Sir,

Vienna, D. June 4, 1910.

R. June 13, 1910.

While I was in London to attend the funeral of King Edward, I had the opportunity of having a conversation with M. Cambon, the French Ambassador, on the subject of Count Aehrenthal's policy, and as it throws some light on the views which are probably held by the French Government with regard to it, it may be worth while reporting it to you. The impression left upon my mind by the conversation which I had with M. Cambon was that he entertained a rooted antipathy for Count Aehrenthal and that he entirely mistrusted that statesman. I may mention here that M. Cambon does not know Count Aehrenthal personally, and that he has consequently formed his opinion with regard to him from second-hand information and from the reports furnished by certain French officials.

M. Cambon began by arguing that Jews are greatly influenced in their actions by personal vanity; Count Aehrenthal was of Jewish descent, therefore, M. Cambon said, we must expect that his policy will be based on and governed to a great extent by personal motives and by petty vanity which will cause it to be spasmodic, haphazard and uncertain in its aims. According to M. Cambon Count Aehrenthal was never inspired by grand motives and never had "le beau geste," and he added that those who trusted his fine phrases would sooner or later find that they were of no value, and were meant to deceive. As far as I could gather M. Cambon's chief cause of irritation just now against Count Aehrenthal was the practical failure of the negotiations for a "rapprochement" between Austria-Hungary and Russia; this "rapprochement" was ardently desired by the French Government, and because it was not achieved entirely as they had hoped, they appear to be inclined to lay the whole blame for this failure upon Count Aehrenthal. M. Cambon asked:—"what reasons could Count Aehrenthal have for refusing to accede to M. Isvolsky's proposal that the results of the negotiations should be communicated to the Powers?" In his opinion there seemed to be no excuse for Count Aehrenthal's action in this matter, and he could only explain Austria's refusal by ascribing it to the desire of Count Aehrenthal to create difficulties for M. Isvolsky for the mere satisfaction of his own personal vanity, in fact, added the French Ambassador, "Aehrenthal voulait de nouveau rouler son rival." That the French Government should have been annoyed by what seemed to be an ungracious act on the part of Count Aehrenthal at that moment, is not astonishing, but I think M. Cambon is deceiving himself in

believing that Count Aehrenthal acted on this occasion out of vanity, and that he had no concrete and real grounds to justify his action.

At the beginning of the year Count Aehrenthal was most desirous of bettering the relations between Austria-Hungary and Russia. It was part of his general policy to mend the breach between his country and her neighbour, for so long as that breach existed, it made the Dual Monarchy very dependent on the good-will of the German Government. Count Aehrenthal made the first advances to M. Isvolsky through M. Vesselitzky, the London correspondent of the "Nowoe Vremja."⁽¹⁾ These were apparently accepted in a friendly spirit at St. Petersburg and the negotiations for an understanding were proceeding on the most favourable lines, when it was suddenly announced that the King of Bulgaria had been invited to come to St. Petersburg, and this was followed a little later by the announcement that a similar invitation had been sent to the King of Servia.⁽²⁾ These visits were to take place at the very moment when Austria-Hungary and Russia were negotiating for an understanding which was to be founded on the basis of the maintenance of the "status quo" in the Balkans. Russia's action in trying to draw to herself the attention of the two most troublesome Balkan States aroused a feeling of disquietude in this country with which Count Aehrenthal had to reckon. The Austrian Minister kept his press well in hand; there were no violent attacks on Russian duplicity, but, nevertheless a great deal of grumbling was heard under the surface. In speaking to me at that time, Count Aehrenthal, though with great reserve, blamed the action of M. Isvolsky as likely to cause a disturbance of the public mind in the Near East; His Excellency remarked to me:—"we, in Vienna, keep our finger on the pulse of the Balkan States; if a tremor passes through them, we feel it at once; I can assure you that M. Isvolsky's action in bringing the two Kings to St. Petersburg at this moment has aroused impossible expectations in various quarters, and it is likely to tend to disturb the tranquillity of the Near East." It must be remembered that the King of Bulgaria then came to Vienna on his way to Russia; that he remained incognito in this city for several days without calling on the Emperor or on Count Aehrenthal; that he summoned his Ministers from Sofia to meet him here; that these Ministers avoided all contamination with the "Ballplatz" so that they should arrive at St. Petersburg pure and undefiled by any contact with Austro-Hungarian politicians; in short, the King and his Ministers started for St. Petersburg from the Austrian capital in a manner which the Balkan nationalities were sure to interpret as a demonstration against Austria-Hungary, and this demonstration was so palpable and evident to everybody that as soon as the Kings reached the Russian capital, M. Isvolsky found it necessary to turn on a jet of cold water on their aspirations. The mischief, however, had been done. Count Aehrenthal saw that the moment had not yet come for a real conciliation with Russia, and he at once decided to bring the conversation with M. Isvolsky to as decent and rapid a close as possible. He made up his mind that he would not yield one step more to M. Isvolsky's demands as no practical good could come from doing so; he wanted a real reconciliation with Russia and apparently M. Isvolsky was not ready to entertain such an idea, at least his actions tended to influence Count Aehrenthal's opinion on that point. It seems to me, therefore, that Count Aehrenthal was acting on this occasion not from motives of personal vanity, as M. Cambon believes, but on the principles which he has often explained to me will always guide his policy; he once declared to me: "I am a 'Realpolitiker'; I strive after real issues; I do not seek for phantom successes."

When Count Aehrenthal arrived in Vienna to take in hand the direction of Austria-Hungary's foreign policy, he came here with the reputation of entertaining the most friendly sentiments towards Russia, and I still believe that in his heart he would rather look for support towards St. Petersburg than towards Berlin. He

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 107-8, No. 96.]

⁽²⁾ [cp. *supra*, p. 146, No. 138.]

was comparatively speaking an unknown man when he succeeded Count Goluchowsky, whose weakness of character had reduced Austria-Hungary to a state of absolute subserviency to Germany. He had few friends in Vienna and no high family connections to assist him; he had therefore to feel his way carefully at first but from the start he began to show a vigour and an independence which aroused considerable astonishment in this country. A confidant of Count Aehrenthal once related to me a story which throws some light upon the former's real sentiments. While Count Aehrenthal was Ambassador at St. Petersburg, he had occasion one day to call on Count Witte on business; on entering the Russian Minister's room, Count Witte exclaimed:—"I have already sounded the German Government on this matter and have received a reply; therefore we also know what are the views held in Vienna on this subject." Count Aehrenthal, I am told, on that occasion lost his temper and made use of very violent language at the idea of Count Witte's that it was sufficient to consult Berlin to ascertain what were the views of the Vienna Cabinet. Count Aehrenthal's confidant said to me—and this was more than a year ago:—"You will see that Count Aehrenthal will take every opportunity to re-establish the absolute independence of Austria-Hungary in international affairs."

It seems to me that if we carefully study the evolution of the policy pursued by Count Aehrenthal, we will see that the above view of it is a fairly correct one. In everything he has done of late Count Aehrenthal has shown a disregard for the susceptibilities of the German Government and it explains perhaps the wrath shown by the Pan-German press against him, and the many attacks which he has had to encounter from the Pro-German press of the Dual Monarchy. I have no doubt that Count Aehrenthal is fully informed as to the chaos which at present exists in the German political world:—an Emperor who, to a great extent, has retired from the direction of public affairs;—a Chancellor, weak and nervous and unsupported by any solid political forces behind him;—the absence of political men of any influence and importance, capable of directing public opinion,—and finally the general discontent which consequently exists in all parts of the Empire with the manner in which the affairs of the nation have of late years been conducted. This state of things has given Count Aehrenthal an opportunity to assert himself, and he has done so without hesitation. It is now Berlin which has to consult Vienna quite as much, and perhaps more, than Vienna which has to consult Berlin on international questions, and if matters continue as they are doing at present, we may expect in a few years to see Austria-Hungary raised to a position of real equality with Germany in the dual alliance. To reach this point seems to me to be Count Aehrenthal's real aim. At the present moment, in spite of the financial difficulties which exist here, I am told Count Aehrenthal is giving his full support to new expenditure on the army and on the fleet because in his opinion military strength is the first requirement if the Dual Monarchy is to assert herself in the direction of European affairs. It need hardly be said that Count Aehrenthal realizes the many advantages which Austria-Hungary can derive from the continuance of her alliance with Germany, but according to him the alliance is perhaps of still more importance to Germany than it is to Austria-Hungary, for Germany, without Austrian support, would find herself placed in a very awkward position, whereas if Germany were to let Austria-Hungary go, the latter would immediately find many friends among Continental Powers. Austria-Hungary is therefore not in as helpless a position as is so often believed, and if her army and her fleet are strong and well equipped, Count Aehrenthal thinks that she can effectively assert herself and become an important factor in the maintenance of the peace of the Continent, acting as a moderating influence should Germany show a disposition to become too aggressive. There are indications that Count Aehrenthal successfully used his influence at Berlin the other day to moderate Germany's demands with regard to Persia, and he appears to have impressed upon the German Government that Austria-Hungary would not follow them if they raised what he considered to be a local question into an international one. Ten days ago M. Ruau, French Minister of Agriculture, had an interview with the Emperor at

Budapest, on which occasion His Majesty declared very clearly that it was inadmissible that the Persian question should be allowed to become a question of serious trouble between the Great Powers. Count Aehrenthal spoke in the same sense to the French Ambassador a few days later, and he did this, I suspect, not so much to please France, Russia and England, as to make Germany clearly understand that he would not allow Austria-Hungary to be dragged into conflicts on matters in which she had no direct interests to defend. It is perhaps worth reporting to you that I learn that just then Herr von Tschirschky, the German Ambassador here, sent for Dr. Szepe, the editor of the Foreign Office organ, the "Fremdenblatt," and begged him to use his influence to restrain the press in issuing alarmist news with regard to Persia as the matter was going to be arranged quietly. Ten days before that [the] Ambassador had spoken in a very different strain to various journalists and people here.

It would be too long if I were to report to you the numerous minor instances which I have noticed of the delight which Count Aehrenthal takes in making the German Government feel that he is "there," and that he has to be consulted. To me this emancipation from the tutelage of Berlin is the primary factor in Count Aehrenthal's policy, and this creates the necessity for him to maintain the best relations with France and England, and when more favourable circumstances shall set in, with Russia. If the relations between Austria-Hungary and these three Powers are good and the Austro-Hungarian army is strong, the Dual Monarchy will before long play a dominant rôle in Central Europe, and that rôle will be that of a peacemaker rather than that of a dictator, as Germany tries to be. We must never lose sight of the fact that from essential reasons Germany's foreign policy is and will remain for a long time to come aggressive in character. Under the present state of things existing in the world there is no opening left to Germany for the creation of colonies of her own. All that she can do for her surplus population is to try and enable it to live in Germany and to compel other nations to purchase the produce of the German workman, so that he should be able to live at home at the expense of the foreigner. We must therefore accustom ourselves to see the whole weight of the German Empire and the arts of her diplomacy being vigorously used for the purpose of breaking down customs tariffs and for the enforcement of the principle of the maintenance of the "open door" for herself, at least in weak and semi-civilized foreign countries. Germany will certainly not hesitate to employ threats, if necessary, for carrying out her purpose, and the only policy for the great Powers to pursue when such threats are used against them is to remain calm and to decline to be moved by any such menaces which for the most part are not meant to be seriously put into execution. An instance of this kind happened quite recently here: The German Government ardently desired to increase the Elbe dues, nominally for the purpose of improving the navigation of that river but in reality to raise a barrier against the transit of Austrian trade to Hamburg by the water-way, and to divert that traffic to the Prussian State Railways which would benefit by it. The German press and Herr von Tschirschky used very violent language at the strong opposition shown here against the German proposals, but when Count Aehrenthal, on his visit to Berlin, absolutely declined to discuss the matter with the German Government, nothing more was heard of it.

In the days of Austria's dependence upon Berlin, Germany obtained very favourable railway rates for her transit trade through the Dual Monarchy to Roumania and to the Near East to the great detriment of the trade of this country in the same direction. It seems to me that here we have the elements of possible serious friction before long between Austria-Hungary and Germany, for as soon as Count Aehrenthal feels himself strong enough to take up the defence of Austrian and of Hungarian interests, regardless of those of Germany, he will not fail to do so. A friend of the Austrian Minister once said to me that Count Aehrenthal looked upon the dual alliance as existing merely for the defence of the centre of the Continent of Europe from attacks either from the East or from the West, and that he would not allow

it in other matters to influence the carrying out of a policy which he intended should only take into consideration the interests of Austria-Hungary. If he only has the strength to pursue such a policy, I think we shall have no reason for complaining for the interests of Austria-Hungary are not likely to clash with those of Great Britain in any part of the world.

As I have previously reported to you, Count Aehrenthal is a man of few words, a hard worker, rarely seen in society, not caring for the show of office but for the reality of power; a man whose mind perhaps works slowly but who, when he has made it up, is stubborn in following the path which he has traced out for himself. I do not believe that in carrying out his policy he will ever be influenced by motives of personal vanity. What that policy is I have tried to outline above; it is impossible to speak of it with certainty for Count Aehrenthal is silent and lifts the veil but slightly now and then. As he said to me on one occasion:—"Il y a des choses que je ne puis vous dire, c'est à vous de les deviner." If I may be allowed to guess Count Aehrenthal's views on one side of European politics, I should say that he is a believer that the peace of Europe is more likely to be maintained by the creation of a balance of power between the well-armed States of Europe than by the creation of a confederation of peace made up of disarmed and weakened unities who would always remain suspicious and jealous of each other.

In conclusion, I will quote to you a passage from a serious Viennese publication called "*Zeitschrift für Staats- und Volkswirtschaft*," as it seems to me to reflect to a great extent the views held by Count Aehrenthal on the broad lines of international policy. The passage is as follows:—

"So long as King Edward was alive, a kind of political equilibrium existed in Europe. For us this equilibrium is the best state of things which can exist. We always feel most at our ease when there is no one on the continent who is too strong. A Louis XIV, a Napoleon, a Bismarck weighed heavily upon us, each in his turn. We require a counter-weight against the preponderance of such persons. This counter-weight existed so long as King Edward sat on the Throne. We can only express the wish and the hope that this counter-weight may continue to remain. The best state of things for us is that King George should not only be the successor of King Edward, but that he should also be the imitator of his policy. For, as was the case in the days of Marlborough and of Prince Eugene, when England is strong, Austria-Hungary is also all the stronger."

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

MINUTES.

This is a most interesting despatch. Sir F. Cartwright, from his personal acquaintance with Count Aehrenthal, is in a far better position to judge of the latter's political motives. Moreover recent events point to Sir Fairfax's version being the correct one and we have for some time known that he earnestly desires a rapprochement with Russia and emancipation from German leading strings. In any case nothing could be more gratifying to his personal vanity—even supposing he were influenced by it—than success in this direction; far more gratifying one would imagine than momentarily annoying M. Iswolsky, dislike him as he may.

R. H. C.

Q[uer]y. Thank Sir F. Cartwright for his interesting despatch.⁽³⁾

Everything that Sir F. Cartwright writes may be and probably is correct, and yet Aehrenthal may well think that a rapprochement with Russia would be served by the disappearance from the scene of M. Iswolsky whom he cannot trust, and may take every opportunity of contributing to it.

W. L.

An admirable despatch.

C. H.

A very able and valuable despatch.

It makes it easy to understand that Sir F. Cartwright has been a success at Vienna.

E. G.

⁽³⁾ [The reply was sent to Sir F. Cartwright (No. 63), on June 18. (F.O. 371/827. 20925/20925/10/3.)]

CHAPTER LXXIII.

THE BALKAN STATES AND TURKEY,

JUNE 1, 1910—MARCH 7, 1911.

No. 155.

Mr. Fındlay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1001.
20937/2520/10/7.
(No. 75.) Secret.
Sir,

Sofia, D. June 1, 1910.
R. June 13, 1910.

In my despatch No. 74, Confidential, of the 24th ultimo,⁽¹⁾ I had the honour to report the substance of a conversation with Assim Bey, Turkish Minister at Sophia. At that time Assim Bey expressed himself as being on the whole quite satisfied with the attitude of the Bulgarian Government. It would appear, however, that Assim Bey now takes rather a gloomy view of Turkish relations with Bulgaria, and that he believes (in spite of M. Malinoff's assurances to the contrary) that communications have been passing between Bulgaria and Greece with a view to concerted action should a favourable opportunity present itself. I also hear that Assim Bey has again been using threatening language to the Bulgarian Government, and has assured them that Turkey is quite able and willing to tackle Bulgaria and Greece at the same time in case of necessity. I regret that he should have done so, and, as far as I can judge, the situation is not such as to call for such strong language. Threats, when repeated too often, lose their effect, especially with Bulgarians. I will take an early opportunity of doing my best to calm my Turkish Colleg[u]e, whose partially Arab blood makes him liable to extremes of optimism and pessimism.

As far as I have myself been able to observe, there has undoubtedly been a process of cooling off in Turco-Bulgarian relations since King Ferdinand's return from Constantinople. As you are aware, there is invariably a certain stiffening in the attitude of Bulgaria when Turkey finds herself in difficulties. The Albanian insurrection and the Cretan Question have had their natural and inevitable effect. There is also a considerable amount of feeling in Bulgaria on the subject of the drastic search for arms in the Yenidjé-Vardar and other districts, and a good deal of justifiable indignation at the manner in which the Bulgarian inhabitants of those districts appear to have been treated during the search for arms.

The result is that the Bulgarian Government, which up to the time of the Constantinople visit had been sitting on the fence, and which then appeared to have climbed down a little on the Turkish side, have now resumed their former position on the top. I do not believe that, so far, they have taken any decision as to future action. I base this opinion on the following grounds.

1.) The news from Albania is so conflicting that the Bulgarian Government would be very rash to trust to the Albanian insurgents seriously to embarrass Turkey if threatened by Bulgaria.

2.) The Bulgarians dislike and mistrust the Greeks intensely and have a very poor opinion of the Greek army.

3.) I hear from a confidential but reliable source that the Servian Minister in Sofia has recently warned the Bulgarian Government that, as long as the present régime in Turkey lasts, Servian interests are definitely and permanently bound up

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced, as its contents are sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 371/1001. 19109/2520/10/7.)]

with the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and that Serbia will not be a party to any action tending to affect that integrity.

4.) As a result of a discussion in the Bulgarian press of an interview with the King of Roumania which was recently published by M. Muntz in the *Neue Freie Presse*, a communiqué appeared in the Roumanian papers to the effect that Bulgaria could always count on the friendship and support of Roumania as long as Bulgarian aspirations were confined to peaceful development "*within her present frontiers*." No notice was taken of this communiqué by the Bulgarian press, but I have every reason to believe that the strong hint thus intentionally conveyed, was not lost upon the Government.

It is therefore clear that Bulgaria cannot, for the present, count on Serbia and still less on Roumania, for any support in action hostile to Turkey. Nor does it appear probable that Servian opposition to such action might be bought off. Serbia lies between Austria and Turkey—between the hammer and the anvil. For the present the fear of Austrian aggression, however unjustified this fear may be, weighs upon every Servian. Serbia is consequently thrown into the arms of Turkey. The more drastic the suppression of the Albanian insurrection, the better the Servians will be pleased. Nor is it probable that the ill-treatment which the Bulgarians in certain parts of Macedonia appear at present to be suffering can be very deeply resented in Serbia. In fact Bulgarian and Servian interests can only be compatible with each other as long as the Macedonian Question is tabooed. It is perhaps worth noticing that whereas before the establishment of the Constitutional Régime in Turkey, Bulgaria might have brought Servian support by concessions in Macedonia, Serbia now appears to have warned Bulgaria that she is not open to any such transaction.

Under the circumstances stated above it would appear that, in bringing any serious pressure to bear on Turkey, Bulgaria would stand alone or would only have the doubtful support of Greece. She might even find herself menaced by Serbia and Roumania. I cannot therefore believe that Bulgaria will commit herself. To do so would be rash, and the Bulgarians are not rash.

At the same time it may well be that the many signs of want of discipline among the Turkish officers have lessened the prestige of the Turkish army in Bulgarian eyes.

On the whole it may be expected that the Bulgarian Government will continue to maintain an expectant attitude until further developments.

I have, &c.

M. DE C. FINDLAY.

P.S.—Copies of this despatch will be sent to Constantinople and Belgrade by first opportunity.

No. 156.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir C. Hardinge.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Hardinge,

St. Petersburg, June 2, 1910.

I think you will consider it very satisfactory that Iswolsky should have approached me as he did on the subject of the negotiations which he will have with Germany regarding Persia and the Bagdad Railway. I have reported what he said in my despatch No. 255.⁽²⁾ His idea is that we ought to agree on some common line of action

⁽¹⁾ [Hardinge MSS., Vol. II of 1910.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It reported M. Iswolski's view that Germany obviously intended to cause a division between the Powers concerned in negotiations about Persia and the Bagdad Railway. Mr. O'Beirne had reminded him of Sir Edward Grey's opinion, expressed in his telegram to Sir A. Nicolson, No. 156 of April 1, 1910 (*cp. infra*, p. 176, note ⁽⁴⁾), that, since Germany could not negotiate *à quatre*, the other countries concerned could negotiate separately and keep each other fully informed of the course of their respective negotiations. (Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey, despatch No. 255 of May 30, 1910. F.O. 371/955. 20070/8445/10/84A.)]

in conducting our respective negotiations with Germany which would preclude all possibility of their giving rise to disagreements between us. He would as a matter of course keep us informed of his negotiations, but he thought that might not be enough. A moment would come when it would be necessary "to make reserves"—meaning as I understand reserves safeguarding the interests of the other two Powers concerned. He said that he had not come to any definite conclusions as to the procedure which we ought to adopt; and he will welcome any suggestions from us. Although we did not go into details, what Iswolsky said seems to me to point to some such arrangement as the following. When Russia is treating with Germany regarding matters which touch our interests, such as say the linking up the Bagdad Railway with lines in Northern Persia, with questions of rates, gauge etc., she would keep us informed of what went on and when she reached a point where she had concrete proposals from Germany before her she would not finally close with them until either we agreed that they did not injure us or we had on our part come to the arrangements with Germany necessary in our interests. We should of course act similarly in our negotiations. I do not know whether Iswolsky would be prepared to go quite so far as this but something of the kind might be attainable. I only hope that his present excellent disposition will not undergo a change when we inform him that we cannot consider the question of a through railway to India. . . .⁽³⁾

Since the above was written I have had a further conversation with Iswolsky this afternoon about the *modus operandi* in negotiating with Germany. He spoke exclusively about Persia. He now states that he is thinking of the advisability of informing Germany that the two Powers will only negotiate about Persia if she will negotiate with them jointly. He said that the kind of procedure which is sketched out above by which we should keep in touch with one another while negotiating separately would be extremely complicated and not altogether safe. Germany would always endeavour by showing herself very conciliatory to one of the two Powers to compromise her with the other. He said however that he was not certain whether His Majesty's Government wished for joint negotiations. I said His Majesty's Government would certainly prefer such negotiations; the only question was whether if Germany absolutely declined them it would be well to insist, with the result that there would be no negotiations at all. I also reminded him of what Sir E. Grey said to the German Chargé d'Affaires on April 1 (F.O. Tel. No. 156)⁽⁴⁾ about negotiating separately on the Bagdad railway question.* Iswolsky said that he thought there would be no harm in making an intimation to Germany in the sense suggested by him. If she refused we could consider what to do next. We should at any rate have shown Germany that she would not succeed in separating us. He proposes to draw up a form of a communication to Germany on which he will ask Sir E. Grey's views. . . .⁽⁵⁾

Yours sincerely,
HUGH O'BEIRNE.

⁽³⁾ [A long paragraph on the Cretan question here follows]

⁽⁴⁾ [Not reproduced. *cp. supra*, p. 175, note ⁽²⁾. (F.O. 371/955. 10744/8445/10/34A.) v. also *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. VI, pp. 442-4, Nos. 337-8.]

* Of course what Sir Edward said informally about the possibility of separate negotiations on the Baghdad railway question would not prevent our refusing separate negotiations regarding Persia, but the two questions are so closely connected that it might be difficult to treat them differently.

H. O'B.

⁽⁵⁾ [The last paragraph refers to the purchase of arms for the Persian Government.]

No. 157.

Mr. Findlay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1001.
 20989/2520/10/7.
 (No. 77.) Secret.
 Sir,

Sofia, D. June 8, 1910.

R. June 13, 1910.

The Servian Minister in Sofia, M. Simitch, called upon me this morning and in the course of conversation confirmed to me directly the information which I had received confidentially from another source, and which I had the honour to report in my despatch No. 75, Secret, of the 1st instant,⁽¹⁾ to the effect that he had recently conveyed a warning to the Bulgarian Minister for Foreign Affairs that Serbia was not prepared to stand in with Bulgaria in any attack on Turkey.

M. Simitch told me he had made this declaration about a fortnight after the beginning of the Albanian insurrection. He had acted on his own initiative, but with the certainty that his action would be approved by his Government. He had told General Paprikoff that Serbia desired peace and friendship with Turkey and sympathised with the efforts of the Turkish Government to introduce law and order into Albania and other unruly districts; that if Bulgaria attacked Turkey, Serbia could not remain indifferent. Either she must take part with Turkey, or she must aim at acquiring certain parts of Turkish territory. Serbia was well aware that if she occupied the Sandjak of Novi Bazar she would bring on a quarrel with Austria-Hungary which would be disastrous. Consequently she would find herself obliged either to side with Turkey or to aim at territorial expansion in agreement with Austria-Hungary.

M. Simitch told me that he had administered this warning as a sedative which he thought was required at the moment, and which he believed to have had a good effect, though this was doubtless due in part to a somewhat similar hint contained in a Roumanian communiqué which was published a few days afterwards. He believed that the feeble resistance offered by the Albanians, which he had predicted to me (see my despatch No. 65, Confidential, of the 10th April),⁽²⁾ had completely convinced the Bulgarians that the present moment was not favourable for bringing pressure to bear on Turkey.

I asked M. Simitch if he thought that under any circumstances King Ferdinand would have the nerve to throw the Bulgarian sword into the balance.

"No," replied M. Simitch, "I am convinced that, unless His Majesty's hand is forced, he will never dare to declare war. But he will continue to act as if he intended doing so, partly from a desire to keep the Macedonian Question open, partly from personal ambition for the realisation of which he does not possess the requisite courage."

I am sending copies of this despatch to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople and to His Majesty's Minister at Belgrade.

I have, &c.

M. DE C. FINDLAY.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 174-5, No. 155.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced, as its tenour is sufficiently indicated above. The date of the despatch is May 10, 1910. (F.O. 371/834. 17382/17382/10/7.)]

No. 158.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.*Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, July 13, 1910.

I asked Iswolsky today whether he contemplated reopening his conversation with Berlin. He replied that he was of opinion that he should do so as he did not desire

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

to lay himself open to the reproach that overtures had been made to him and that he had preserved silence. His difficulty lay in the mode of procedure. . . .⁽²⁾

I asked him what line he intended to follow if he did reopen discussions. He replied that he was not very clear and that he had little hope of the discussions leading to any results. Germany would probably require that Russia should construct the Khanikin Tehran line. This Russia was not inclined to do—at any rate for the present, even though Germany engaged not to trouble Russia in her Persian sphere. He asked how matters stood between us and Germany in regard to Persia and the Bagdad Railway. I thought that this gave me an opportunity of conveying to him, as you had desired me to do, the purport of your private letter to Goschen of May last,⁽³⁾ and of giving him a little closer insight into our position with Germany. I therefore spoke to him in substance as follows.

I said that as regards Persia itself Germany had been for some time silent and quiescent; and that for some few weeks she had made no move or overtures. In fact I believed that Metternich had received instructions to put Persia on the shelf for a time. As to the Bagdad Railway, which in reality was the “noeud de la question,” we were in this position. He knew that Gwinner and Cassel had been discussing the details.⁽⁴⁾ Whether they would have arrived at an agreement acceptable to both Governments I do not know, but the matter, as far as the two Governments were concerned, had recently been shifted to a different ground. The Chancellor had informed Goschen that he would not be able to meet our wishes in regard to the southern section of the line unless we came to a general political arrangement with Germany. Now he (Isvolsky) knew from past confidential information from us that our view was that it was useless to entertain seriously the idea of a political arrangement until an agreement had been reached as to naval armaments and shipbuilding. We gathered that in a general way the political arrangement which Germany had in view would be of a more extended scope than the arrangements existing between us and France and Russia. I could give him no details but that was our impression. Now we would not be disposed to enter into any political arrangement with Germany which would tend to weaken our relations with France and Russia, or which would be of such a nature as not to permit France or Russia participating in it should they desire to do so. Our arrangements with France and Russia had originally been concluded to settle certain specific outstanding questions. The course of events and the force of circumstance had doubtless amplified and extended the field of these arrangements, but beyond the original Conventions dealing with and settling the outstanding questions no further formal agreement had been made, and the countries had been drawn into a common line almost insensibly and naturally. With Germany we had practically no outstanding questions, and it would be of more serious import, although we were most desirous to live on the best possible terms with Germany, were we to embody in a formal agreement a political arrangement of some kind or another. The Bagdad Railway question, so far as it concerned us and Germany, was therefore for the present in a state of suspense. I hope you will agree with my having spoken in the above terms and I carefully abstained from giving him too much information. He was much interested in my few remarks and was evidently gratified.

Yours sincerely,
A. NICOLSON.

(2) [The omitted paragraphs deal in some detail with M. Isvolski's perplexities concerning the reopening of discussions with Great Britain and Germany, separately or together. They are omitted from considerations of space.]

(3) [*v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. VI, pp. 478-9, No. 361]

(4) [*cp. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. VI, pp. 325-433, Chapter XLVI, *passim*.]

Mr. Findlay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1001.

26736/2520/10/7.

(No. 90.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sofia, D. July 21, 1910.

R. July 25, 1910.

It is perhaps worth while to call attention to the fact that the military situation in the Balkan Peninsula is changing rapidly and much to the detriment of Bulgaria.

If, during the spring of 1909, Bulgaria had suddenly attacked Turkey, especially at the moment when, owing to the outbreak at Constantino[p]le, the Turkish army was divided against itself, the Bulgarian army might have easily reached the Turkish Capital before it could have been stopped by intervention, either on the part of Roumania and possibly Servia, or on the part of the Great Powers.

It is useless to speculate as to what the ultimate result of such an attack on Turkey might have been. But it is possible that Bulgaria might then have purchased the neutrality of Roumania by territorial sacrifices, and of Servia by promises of compensation in Macedonia which might, or might not, have been kept. It is also evident that the advance of the Bulgarian army would have been greatly facilitated by an armed insurrection of the Bulgarian population in Macedonia. In fact Bulgaria had at that moment the power of starting a war in the first phase of which, at any rate, the Bulgarian army had every chance of success, and which it might have been extremely difficult to localise.

The fortification of Adrianople and the disarmament of the Macedonian Bulgars, which is now in progress, and which is apparently being carried out in the usual Turkish style, has already profoundly altered the situation, and when these two measures are complete, the military position of Bulgaria will have suffered as much as it might have done after an unsuccessful war.

Colonel Napier has already pointed out that the fortification of Adrianople renders a Bulgarian "coup de main" on Constantinople practically impossible, the Bulgarian army not being sufficiently numerous to mask a considerable fortress which might easily prove a second Plevna.

It is also obvious that a general insurrection of a disarmed population in Macedonia could have no serious effect as a diversion and might be difficult to produce.

It is natural that many of the Bulgarian officers consider that the golden opportunity, to be ready for which the country had made such sacrifices, has been lost, and that, unless there is a complete *débâcle* in Turkey, such an opportunity may not occur again for a generation—perhaps never.

It is inevitable that the moral effect of this loss of prestige should be great, and that the Bulgarian army should suffer from the consequent discouragement and lack of immediate and inspiring objective.

I do not imagine that Turkey is at the end of her troubles, and the aggressive chauvinism, which appears to be one of the leading characteristics of her present rulers, may easily involve the present régime in dangerous difficulties which would offer Bulgaria another opportunity. But at present the discouragement in the forward party in this country is great, and they naturally attribute their misfortunes to King Ferdinand. owing to whose lack of nerve, what they consider as a heaven-sent chance of realising Bulgarian aspirations and freeing their compatriots in Macedonia was not taken.

I have, &c.

M. DE C. FINDLAY.

MINUTES

Captain James, Times Correspondent, who has recently returned from Albania, does not share these views. He told me a few days ago that the state of discipline in the Turkish Army in Macedonia is so bad that the Bulgarians would be easily able to obtain initial successes in a

war with Turkey, but he did not know whether they would be able to hold their ground if the Turks were allowed time to bring up large bodies of troops from Anatolia and elsewhere

C. H.

If the Bulgarians are conscious of the disadvantage which Mr. Findlay points out and the Turks are conscious of the weakness which Captain James has discovered there is a fair chance of peace.

E. G.

No. 160.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, July 21, 1910.

I was spending last weekend in Iswolsky's company in the neighbourhood, and he spoke to me as to his position. He told me that he doubted if he would remain long at the Foreign Office, owing to the attitude he had assumed in respect to the Bill regarding Finland. He had combated it in the Council of Ministers as going too far, and withdrawing from Finland practically all her rights.⁽²⁾ Iswolsky said that Stolypine had been very pleasant to him on the subject, and begged him to continue to retain his portfolio and bore him no grudge for having abstained. Nevertheless his enemies at Court, and they were many, would naturally make the most of his secession, and though he "might drag through the winter," he doubted if his tenure of office would be a prolonged one. He would nestle down in some Embassy—Vienna and Berlin were excluded—London, to which he aspired, was so well filled by Benckendorff that it would not be vacant. There remained Paris and Rome, and I dare say that if he does go to an Embassy one of those two will be selected for him. Iswolsky acted well and honourably, and showed more firmness than I should have expected from him.⁽³⁾

Yours sincerely,

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

⁽²⁾ [A long paragraph giving details about Finland here follows.]

⁽³⁾ [The final paragraph is about China and Japan.]

No. 161.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1012.

28546/28546/10/44.

(No. 521.) Confidential.

Sir,

Therapia, D. July 30, 1910.

R. August 8, 1910.

Two years have now elapsed since the constitutional regime was introduced into this country and it may not be without interest to examine how the new system of Government has affected the relations of Turkey with the most important Powers represented here. These may be taken to be Great Britain, France, Germany, and Russia. The relations of the other Great Powers with the Porte call for but little comment.

The early days of the Constitution were marked by considerable enthusiasm for Great Britain and France, the former owing to the fact that we stood before the world as the representatives par excellence of constitutional government and because we had been the stoutest opponents of the hated Hamidian regime, the French because it was in their country that prominent Young Turks, like Ahmed Riza Bey, &c., had found a refuge and a congenial atmosphere for developing their plans.

To those who imagined that the policy of a country could be dictated by sentiment, and not by advantages to be gained, it appeared that Great Britain was destined to occupy a privileged position. There are no doubt a very large number of Turks who remember, and often allude to the many occasions on which Great Britain has come to the rescue of the Turkish Empire, but those animated by such sentiments and who took part in pro-British demonstrations in 1908 are mainly in sullen opposition to those now in power. The latter look only to the actual state of affairs and to the advantages to be immediately gained, and these cannot conceal from themselves many factors in which they see that the attitude of Great Britain is not entirely favourable to them. Our valuable support in the Bosnia-Herzegovina question was but little appreciated by them and they considered that the success in obtaining the financial compensation was due entirely to the Boycott that was imposed.

In the Cretan question which, it must be admitted, is one in which the country as a whole can take no deep interest but which was put forward as a test case to prove the success or failure of the new régime, the Young Turks, as represented by the present Government, have regarded Great Britain as being the principal obstacle to an immediate and final settlement entirely in favour of Turkey, and it is generally accepted that while France and Italy would have consented to the maintenance of troops in the island, Great Britain was opposed to it.

Egypt is a sore that naturally remains open, and whereas in the early days of the new régime those in power were well advised in allowing that question to slumber, latterly the Nationalist idea has been warmly though secretly nursed and ex-President Roosevelt's speeches in Cairo and in London have proved a strong irritant. Some anxiety is also felt that in Arabia where there is little feeling of affection or admiration for the new régime, the sympathies of the Arabs might easily be turned towards Great Britain.

With the chauvinistic or ultra-patriotic ideas which have not unnaturally pervaded the ranks of the Young Turks and for which they cannot be blamed, our privileged position in the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia has not been lost sight of and the mere fact of an Englishman being employed in drawing up plans for the irrigation of Mesopotamia has, as much in the new régime as in that of Abdul Hamid, been regarded with profound suspicion.

To turn to Persia, where for years back the Government of Abdul Hamid had designs towards obtaining a more favourable strategic frontier, the Turkish Government found itself confronted, not only by Russian protests, but by the fact that these protests were supported by Great Britain. In the early days of the new régime the then Grand Vizier said to me "If you are obliged to make protests in connection with Russia, be careful to let them come from Russia and support them with as little energy as possible for to every Turk Russia is an enemy, and an enemy that can never become a friend."

The fact that His Majesty's Government had been unable to agree to the sale of a man of war from our fleet is quoted as evidence of the fact that Great Britain's protestations of friendship are confined to words only.

In the matter of the demand on the part of the Porte for an increase of the 4% Customs Duty, Great Britain has had to bear the larger share of odium for imposing conditions for acceptance, some of the other Powers declaring that they merely put forward conditions because we had done so.

Finally, there exists a consciousness that the leaders of the new régime, despite their good intentions, have substituted Panislamism for Ottomanism and have not succeeded in following the cardinal principles laid down, namely that of equal treatment for all races in this country; and although public opinion in England has until now given no indiction of being unduly exacting towards the new order of things the apprehension that by unconstitutional methods and restrictions of political and personal liberty they have not succeeded entirely in acting up to their protestations and that constitutional government and a prolonged state of siege do not, properly speaking, harmonize, has created with many of the leading members of the governing body an

unreasonable feeling of annoyance with us because they themselves had not succeeded in meriting more general approval.

The net result is that the Young Turks ask themselves how our constantly repeated protestations in favour of the new regime can be reconciled with our attitude on the above questions, more especially those of Crete and Persia, while at the same time they keep for Great Britain the greatest measure of respect and are impressed with the conviction that, should the Turkish Empire be ever again threatened, Great Britain will, seeing her interests in the maintenance of the integrity of the Empire, come to her assistance.

During the first year of the new regime, France did little towards improving her position in this country in spite of the immense advantages that she has from the fact that her language is the foreign language that is usually employed here, that she spends very large sums in schools &c., and that the Tobacco Regie and the Ottoman Bank are, through their agents, able to spread French ideas through every corner of the Empire. Loud were the complaints and lamentations that French financiers were sucking the life's blood from Turks, that the Ottoman Bank was as exacting towards the new regime as it had been grasping towards that of Abdul Hamid. When the competition of the National Bank failed, it came home to those connected with finance here, that it was wiser not to quarrel with those who held the purse strings, and since then there are indications that France is entering upon a more favoured position to which she is eminently entitled considering the vast sums she has already invested and those she is likely to be compelled to lend to Turkey in the near future. These loans however will probably not be given without substantial economical advantages—and as the sums required are considerable, so will also be the sops to French concession hunters.

In the purely political field France has had no reason to incur the resentment of the Young Turks. If her attitude as regards Crete has not yet borne fruit, this has been attributed to the directing influence of Great Britain and no occasions have presented themselves in which Russia has called upon French support here.

The position of Russia here during the last two years cannot be said to have changed. Emphatic have been the protestations of her Ambassador during the past year that all old dissensions between Russia and Turkey are dead and that the former is only inspired with great sympathy and good wishes for the latter under her new régime, but there is so far no indication that all this coquetting has met with any response. The final phase of the revolution in Persia, i.e. the dethronement of the late Shah, brought about, in a great measure, through Turkish influences was regarded as being far from well received by Russia and the presence of the latter's troops in northern Persia is deeply resented by the Young Turks who conveniently ignore that their own military occupation and administration of the part of Azerbaijan adjoining Urumia are not calculated to hasten the departure of the Russian forces.

The visit of the King of the Bulgarians,⁽¹⁾ known to have been suggested by Russia, was regarded as premature and as throwing a slight upon this country, though it must be admitted that the general effect has been good.

A flicker of applause greeted M. Tcharykow's circular to consuls (see my despatch No. 711 of August 31 last,⁽²⁾ which seemed to indicate that Russia was going to lead the way towards the abolition of the Capitulations but that flicker soon died away and every Turk is asking himself when the smiles and honied words of Russia will give way to an attitude which, it is anticipated, will be considerably less friendly to the Ottoman Government.

In the initial stages of the constitutional government Germany, thanks to her very intimate connection with Abdul Hamid, was looked upon with some suspicion by the civilian elements of the population, but the admiration of the army, which has

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 161, No. 149; *Ed. note* immediately succeeding]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. A copy of the circular was enclosed. (F.O. 371/780. 34182/34182/09/44.)]

necessarily been the backbone of the movement, and on which it must continue to rely, is as deep as ever. A very large number of Turkish officers have been educated in Germany, and the military organisation of that country appeals warmly to them. Turkey is above all a military nation and must rely upon her sword. Mahmoud Shevket has more than once said to me that all Turkey requires is a strong military force and with that her position is assured. Germany has no doubt encouraged that view and she does not have to provide the funds required to furnish the latest military equipment, which is however naturally for the greater part purchased in Germany. She has but little reason to seek other concessions than that of the Bagdad Railway,^(*) which has been pushed forward so far that the Turks have the conviction, strongly established, that, even at a great sacrifice, the line must be continued to Bagdad. The Turks think, rightly or wrongly, that Germany has at any rate in the near future no political designs in this country and that her aspirations are purely commercial, that these cannot injure them and that the Bagdad Line must inevitably be of advantage both from the military point of view and for the development of Asia Minor.

It must also not be forgotten that the manner in which Russia capitulated last year over the Bosnian negotiations to the German "ultimatum" made a deep and abiding impression on the Turkish imagination, and correspondingly increased German prestige here.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

(*) [*cp Gooch & Temperley, Vol. VI, Chapter XLVI, passim*]

[*ED. NOTE*—The following telegram from Sir G. Lowther refers to the visit of King Ferdinand to Constantinople (*cp. immediately preceding document*). King Ferdinand arrived on March 21, and, as shown below, left on March 28:—

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

Pera, March 27, 1910.

F.O. 371/1001.
10306/2520/10/44.
Tel. (No. 49.)

D. 12 noon.
R. 1.10 P.M.

Conversations have taken place between Turkish and Bulgarian Ministers on following subjects: Commercial treaty; junction of railways, delimitation of frontier; question of nationality of inhabitants of Eastern Roumelia; exarchate question. A general understanding has been arrived at on all points except the last, on which they are not in absolute agreement, but Ottoman Minister thinks Bulgarians will not insist on their view. Ottoman Minister appears satisfied with result of these pourparlers.

Macedonian question does not seem to have been mentioned

Visit of King, which terminates to-morrow, has passed off well, and has on the whole produced a good effect.

(Sent to Sophia.)]

No. 162.

Tewfik Pasha to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/999.
27806/926/10/44.
Particulière.

Mon cher Ministre,

Londres, le 31 Juillet 1910.

En l'absence de Votre Excellence, je viens par un Memorandum Lui signaler la récente démarche du Gouvernement Bulgare au sujet du désarmement en Macédoine, en y attirant, d'ordre de la Sublime Porte, Sa sérieuse attention.

Votre Excellence n'ignore pas que, grâce à l'action énergique entreprise en Albanie, cette contrée est presque entièrement pacifiée; pour y assurer le maintien

et la continuation de cette œuvre, le Gouvernement Impérial, a en même temps, procédé au désarmement de la population.

Une fois l'Albanie désarmée, il était naturel que les Autorités Impériales procédassent aux mêmes mesures dans les autres Villayets de la Roumélie. C'est ainsi qu'elles commencèrent dernièrement à désarmer aussi les habitants du district de Serrès (Salonique). Cette opération continuera jusqu'au désarmement complet de toute la population de la Turquie d'Europe, car la sécurité entière et durable dans ces régions ne peut être obtenue que le jour où tous ses habitants seront dépourvus d'armes et de munitions.

Cela étant, il est aisé de voir les véritables motifs du tapage et du tumulte que les Bulgares de Sofia font maintenant autour de cette affaire. Il est inconcevable qu'on ait pu penser en Bulgarie qu'on désarmerait seuls les Albanais et les autres habitants musulmans, qui d'ailleurs constituent l'absolue majorité dans ces régions, et qu'on permettrait aux Bulgares de conserver leurs armes! Il est aussi surprenant que les Bulgares essayent aujourd'hui de dénaturer les faits, tant par la voie de leur presse que par celle d'une partie de la presse européenne, et de prétendre que le désarmement est l'action d'un régime injuste et tyrannique et non pas un moyen pour un Etat constitutionnel d'assurer l'ordre et la sécurité!

Quant à la question des procédés violents, attribués à nos autorités militaires, à l'égard des Bulgares Ottomans qu'il s'agit de désarmer, je n'ai pas besoin d'insister auprès de Votre Excellence sur le non-fondé de ces allégations malveillantes et intentionnelles. Les autorités militaires invitent les Bulgares aussi bien que les Grecs, Serbes et Turcs à leur livrer les armes et les munitions qu'ils détiennent. Il va s'en dire que ceux qui refusent d'obéir à ces injonctions sont traités avec le minimum de rigueur, et cela, sans distinction de race ni de religion.

Tout ceci suffira j'espère à donner à Votre Excellence une idée juste et concrète de la question du désarmement dans les provinces de la Turquie d'Europe, dont l'unique but et raison sont d'y rétablir une sécurité absolue et durable dans l'intérêt même de toutes les populations y résidant en général, et des Chrétiens Ottomans en particulier. Elle voudra bien convenir que le Gouvernement Impérial et l'opinion publique en Turquie ne peuvent plus désormais tolérer l'intervention dans les affaires intérieures de l'Empire des Etats voisins, avec lesquels il s'efforce d'ailleurs de maintenir les bonnes relations, surtout lorsque cette intervention se trouve être comme dans le cas présent complètement injustifiée.

Je crois utile d'attirer l'attention de Votre Excellence sur ce point important, et de La prier instamment, et à titre d'ami sincère de la Turquie constitutionnelle, de faire entendre à Sofia l'absolue nécessité de modifier une pareille tactique dans la politique du Royaume Bulgare vis-à-vis de l'Empire voisin.

Veillez agréer, &c.

TEWFIK.

Enclosure in No. 162.

Memorandum.

Nos. 6066/88.

La Sublime Porte apprend que le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères de Bulgarie a demandé aux Représentants des Grandes Puissances à Sofia d'engager leur Gouvernement à faire entendre à Constantinople des conseils de modération dans la question du désarmement en Roumélie.

Le Gouvernement Impérial aime à espérer que la réponse des Six Puissances sera négative; car une démarche de cette nature faite à l'instigation de la Bulgarie touchant les affaires intérieures de l'Empire, lui serait fort désagréable et amènerait nécessairement quelque froideur dans ses relations avec le Royaume voisin, d'autant plus que les plaintes de la Bulgarie sont intentionnelles et sans base.

Le désarmement en Macédoine, indistinctement appliqué tant aux Musulmans qu'aux Chrétiens, se poursuit dans les conditions normales et avec le minimum de

rigueur inévitable. Il aura pour résultat certain d'assurer la complète sécurité dans ces contrées dont la caractéristique était jusqu'ici l'ébullition permanente.

Les quelques réfugiés qui, de l'aveu même du Gouvernement Bulgare, ne dépassent pas le chiffre de quarante-trois, consistent en conscrits qui ne veulent pas se présenter à l'appel réglementaire. Les gouvernants actuels Bulgares exploitent cette circonstance en vue de ressusciter l'affaire macédonienne et relever le prestige du parti au pouvoir en prévision des élections prochaines. La Sublime Porte ne peut se dissimuler que la pacification définitive de la Macédoine ne leur convient pas puisqu'elle rend à jamais impossible la réalisation de leurs aspirations.

La nécessité de poursuivre le désarmement est d'autant plus impérieux que les recherches des autorités Impériales amènent malheureusement la découverte non-seulement de grandes quantités d'armes enfouies, mais même de bombes.

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique peut être persuadé de la ferme volonté de la Sublime Porte d'obtenir la pacification complète de la Turquie d'Europe malgré les intrigues incessamment variées des turbulents voisins de l'Empire. Aussi compte-t-elle sur l'amitié du Gouvernement Anglais pour se voir épargner une démarche injustifiée et inutile.

Londres le 31 Juillet 1910.

No. 163.

Mr. Findlay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/999.

28589/926/10/44A.

(No. 94.) Secret.

Sir,

Sofia, D. August 2, 1910.

R. August 8, 1910.

In my despatch No. 90 Confidential of the 21st instant [*sic*: ultimo]⁽¹⁾ written just before the departure of the last messenger, I had the honour to describe the rapid change to the detriment of Bulgaria of the military situation in the Balkan Peninsula, which was due:

1. To the fortification of Adrianople.
2. To the disarmament of the Christian population in Macedonia which was apparently being carried out "in the usual Turkish style."

In a private letter to Sir Charles Hardinge,⁽²⁾ sent by the same bag, I said that things were "calm—too calm."

Unpleasant rumours had, in fact, reached me that fugitives from Turkish ill-treatment had arrived in Dubnitsa and Kustendil, and that the well-known Macedonian band-leaders, Tchernopéef, Apostol, Tané Nicoloff, Zankoff, Chakoff, and Bousonkoff had evaded the surveillance of the Bulgarian police at the various places in the Interior where they were interned, and, together with about a dozen adherents, had crossed the frontier into Macedonia with a view to forming bands on Turkish territory. I also heard that Mr. Liaptcheff, who has been in charge of the Bulgarian Ministry for Foreign Affairs during the absence of General Paprikoff, intended to address a circular to the Powers calling their attention to the brutality with which the disarmament was being carried out by the Turkish authorities in the districts of Koumanovo and Ishtip and requesting their support of representations he proposed to make to the Turkish Government on the subject.

On the 21st instant [*sic*: ultimo] I heard that this circular was on the point of being dispatched. I at once asked for an interview with Mr. Liaptcheff. I had to wait about an hour as His Excellency was "in conference" with the Turkish Minister,

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 179, No. 159.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It refers to the fortification of Adrianople and the disarmament of the Christians in Macedonia; to King Ferdinand's visit to Paris; and to the diplomatic position of Roumania. (Hardinge MSS., Vol. II of 1910.)]

and on receiving me Mr. Liaptcheff at once began by giving me a résumé of the outrages to which he had been calling Assim Bey's attention. His Government had nothing to say against the disarmament so long as it was general, but he protested against it being carried out with such partiality, cruelty, and injustice, as to drive the Bulgarian peasantry of the districts in question to take refuge in the mountains or in Bulgaria, where the presence of a number of destitute refugees would cause grave difficulties both internal and external. Thirty had already arrived at Dubnitsa and Kustendil and they reported that at least eight hundred more were en route.

The system pursued by the Turkish Authorities was to surround a village by a cordon of troops and then, on the information of soldiers who had served in the district, or of some local Mussulman, to demand an arbitrary number of arms by the following morning. If the number demanded was not forthcoming, the Mayor, or Christian notables, were tied up and beaten, or tortured, in the hope of extorting information as to secret hiding-places probably known only to a few band-leaders. At Ishtip a band under Alexandroff had threatened the peasants with death if they gave up arms, and the result was that, terrified by the threats of the "Comitajis" on the one side, and by the cruelty of the troops on the other, the population was fleeing to the mountains or to Bulgaria. The Turkish Government were making no serious effort to capture the bands and restricted their activity to bullying the peaceful peasantry. If these were fleeing from their houses, leaving their harvest unreaped, it was obvious that they had serious cause for fear.

I told his Excellency that I had heard of the passage of the frontier by Tchernopéeff and his companions. He had heard that some band-leaders had crossed but had no authentic information as to their identity. He was certain that no band had been formed in Bulgaria, and that the Voivodes I had mentioned could only have got through the frontier posts singly or in small groups. Strict orders had been issued some time ago (see my despatch No. 69, Conf[idential], of the 10th May last),⁽³⁾ and a fresh circular to the frontier authorities had just been issued. Both he and his colleagues were absolutely averse to the employment of bands in Macedonia and were desirous of peaceful and friendly relations with Turkey. But these were only possible if life was made tolerable for the Bulgarian population in Macedonia. Bulgaria could not continue indefinitely to have her internal and external policy upset by Turkish misrule. Both the Bulgarian Government and the Ottoman Bulgarians had given numerous signs of good will to the present régime and what had been the reward? They had been jockeyed at the elections, their constitutional clubs had been dissolved, and now Dr. Nazim and his friends of the Salonica Committee were endeavouring to change the ethnic character of Macedonia by planting mohadjirs in the Bulgarian districts, and were driving the indigenous peasantry from their homes by every sort of persecution and injustice. His Government had recently endeavoured to convince Turkey of their good faith by agreeing to the junction of the Bulgarian and Turkish railways in the neighbourhood of Kirk-Kilisé, which the Turks had always desired and Bulgaria had hitherto opposed for strategic reasons. It was evident, however, that Turkey was still unconvinced. Bulgaria must obtain justice by other methods. In the meantime he intended to address a circular to the Powers calling their attention to the atrocities by which the disarmament of the Macedonian Christians was accompanied, and requesting them to support the friendly remonstrances which he intended to make at Constantinople.

I asked his Excellency if he expected any result from the proposed circular. "No," he replied, "the Turks are hopeless and I am aware that the Powers may hesitate to intervene, but it is the traditional policy of the Ministry to explain a critical situation by means of a circular." That, I said, appeared to be a very bad reason for adopting a form of procedure which was exactly the one most calculated to irritate the Turkish Government and to make them less amenable to any advice

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 371/884. 17386/17386/10/7)]

which the Powers might possibly feel inclined to offer. I, personally, doubted if the Powers would be inclined to intervene at the present moment, but in any case I strongly advised his Excellency to adopt a less offensive form of procedure than the issue of a circular.

After thinking for a short time Mr. Liaptcheff thanked me for my friendly advice, and promised to consider it seriously.

He evidently did so, as, two days afterwards at his weekly reception, he spoke to all the Foreign Representatives, with the exception of the German Minister who did not attend it, on the subject of the outrages accompanying the disarmament in Macedonia and begged them to inform their Governments, and to request their support of a Note he intended to present to the Turkish Government, but made no mention of a circular. Mr. Liaptcheff appears finally to have decided to cause friendly remonstrances to be made *verbally*.

Considerable doubt existed at first as to whether King Ferdinand had, as seemed most probable, instigated the action of the Bulgarian Government.

Arguing that the hesitation of the Ministers as to the proper method to pursue was against this hypothesis, the Roumanian Minister and myself arrived at the conclusion that the Ministers had acted without instructions from the King. Mr. Malinoff, in conversation with the Russian Chargé d'Affaires, has subsequently stated, with some complacency, that he, and Mr. Liaptcheff, had decided on making representations at Constantinople on their own initiative, and Mr. Liaptcheff told me yesterday that the King had not been, and was not being, consulted—adding, “the King is en Voyage.”

The fact that the two Ministers have dared to take independent action on a question so serious as that of Macedonia is an entirely new departure, and may have a very important influence on Bulgarian politics both internal and external. While the elimination, for the moment, of the King's influence simplifies, to a certain extent, the difficult task of judging the motives for the action of the Bulgarian Government, its ultimate effect may be dangerous. Both Mr. Malinoff and Mr. Liaptcheff are serious and determined men who may have the courage to take risks from which King Ferdinand would shrink. It remains to be seen what His Majesty will do to retrieve his position, but the Government seem to think that he dare not dismiss them in consequence of their action.

To return for a moment to the procedure adopted by Mr. Liaptcheff, it was supposed that his Excellency had, intentionally or otherwise, made a difference in his communication to the various representatives, inasmuch as he had not spoken to the German Minister at all, and the Austrian Chargé d'Affaires denied that he had been requested to ask his Government to support the representations of the Bulgarian Minister at Constantinople. I asked Mr. Liaptcheff yesterday why he had not spoken to the Austrian and German Representatives in the same sense as to their colleagues, pointing out that, if the Powers did decide to offer advice, the Turkish Government were much more likely to listen to it if it was unanimous. Mr. Liaptcheff assured me that he had particularly asked the Austrian Chargé d'Affaires to request the support of his Government, and that the latter had promised to do so. There was no possible misunderstanding. He regretted that he had not made a point of seeing the German Minister and quite appreciated the desirability of avoiding the appearance of an appeal to a particular group.

After my first conversation with Mr. Liaptcheff I took an early opportunity of speaking to Assim Bey, the Turkish Minister, and of urging him to do his best to induce his Government to put a stop to the brutality of which the Bulgarian Government were complaining. He was in rather an excited state at first, and kept on repeating that his Government would not allow Bulgaria to mention Macedonia. The disarmament must be carried out at any cost; if there were brutalities, they were due to the bands and emissaries who instigated the Christians to resist. The Bulgarians had no right to complain; they had often been guilty of brutality; Mussulman Albanians had been disarmed and now the Christians protested. In any

case the disarmament was an internal question between the Turkish Government and Turkish subjects with which Bulgaria had nothing to do, and that, if the Bulgarian Government interfered, Turkey would know how to deal with them.

I pointed out that some of his arguments were futile and others unworthy of him. It was quite as much in the interests of Turkey as in those of Bulgaria to put a stop to the alleged ill-treatment of Christians. Turkey enjoyed the sympathy and support of Europe on the supposition that the Turkish Government were bent on doing their best to establish a civilised Government. If it became generally known that the same outrages were permitted under the Constitutional Government as under the old régime, there would be a revulsion of public opinion which would constitute a loss to Turkey much greater than that of a few depots of rusty old rifles, the locality of which might be ascertained by torturing peasants. I did not wish to prejudge the case, but the arrival of refugees at harvest-time showed that the people were panic-stricken. He said that the Bulgarian Government had seized on the refugees as a pretext for their action. I admitted that he might be right on that point, but urged the advisability of depriving the Bulgarian Government of this pretext. The worst enemies of Turkey were those who committed excesses in the name of her Government. As a friend of Turkey I appealed to him to do what he could to put a stop to the excesses complained of, which I knew that he, a civilised and humane man, must reprobate as much as I did, and which were an insuperable obstacle to the good relations which His Majesty's Government desired to see established between Turkey and Bulgaria. He finally promised me to do his very best, and I believe that he has done it.

I had yesterday a conversation with Mr. Liaptcheff which lasted an hour and a-half. His Excellency told me that he was quite satisfied with Assim Bey, and did not accuse the Turkish Government of instigating outrages. These were chiefly perpetrated by troops who had been employed in disarming Mussulman Albanians. They were disgusted at having to do so, and were now revenging themselves on the Christian Bulgarians. They were being spurred on to "energetic" action by the local representatives of the Salonica Committee of Union and Progress. Against these men the Ministers at Constantinople were powerless. They were present in every village and usurped all the functions of Government. In old days the peasants were allowed to cut wood in the State forests for their personal use. Now these forests were gradually passing into the hands of members of the Committee, and were being exploited, i.e., the forests were being felled and large quantities of wood exported; this, he supposed, was "progress." As to "union" the Committee and their representatives appeared everywhere to concentrate their energies on sowing discord and stirring up race-hatred, as in the Perlepé incident, into which His Excellency went in detail. In the time of Abdul Hamid there were at any rate recognised officials, with whom it was possible for the Christians to deal in one way or another. Now there were, besides and above the officials, the representatives of the Committee, who were simply so many petty Abdul Hamids, each running his own policy and respecting neither law nor custom.

The policy of his Government since they came into power had been, and continued to be, the establishment of good relations with Turkey, with the ultimate object of reducing the expenditure on the Army. With this object, Mr. Takeff, the Minister of the Interior, had done his best to break up the Macedonian revolutionary societies, and had incurred great personal risk in so doing. They had absolutely prevented the passage of bands, and had taken severe repressive action against ex-voïvodes. Turkey was now complaining that Tchernopéef and other voïvodes had evaded the surveillance of the Bulgarian police, but these very men had lived for years in Turkey, some without being caught, some like Tchernopéef on good terms with the new régime. I said that I could not help thinking that there must have been some connivance in this case, Mr. Liaptcheff assured me that it was not on the part of the Government. The voïvodes had doubtless sympathisers who facilitated their passage, or had failed to report it. But he had only heard of their evasion when they had passed the frontier.

The Turks seemed to think it an outrage that the Bulgarian frontier posts had failed to stop them, but quite natural that their own posts had not done so.

Returning to the main subject of our conversation, Mr. Liaptcheff emphatically repeated that the Turks were incorrigible. If they put a stop to the excesses and mended their ways, he would resume his friendly policy; if not, Bulgaria must follow a different line and was prepared to face any difficulties that might arise. I warned him that such a policy would most probably lead to war between the two countries sooner or later, and that all the Great Powers desired peace and would have no sympathy with any State which followed a policy of adventure: that Bulgaria had no understanding with her two neighbours, Servia and Roumania, and that isolated action might prove disastrous. Mr. Liaptcheff replied that he was quite alive to the truth of what I had said. His Government would do nothing rash, and in no case would they seek a war. But the present state of things was intolerable. If war came in the end Bulgaria would accept it. It might be disastrous to her but it would also be disastrous to Turkey.

Mr. Liaptcheff spoke quietly and with great earnestness throughout, and gave me the impression that he was being careful to avoid exaggeration.

His statements are to a considerable extent corroborated by the consular reports enclosed in Sir G. Lowther's despatches Nos. 446, 450, and 478,⁽⁴⁾ and by his Excellency's telegram No. 141.⁽⁵⁾

I propose to submit some further observations on the motives for the action of the Bulgarian Government and other aspects of the situation in separate despatches.

A copy of this despatch will be sent to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople by next messenger.

I have, &c.

M. DE C. FINDLAY.

MINUTE.

Mr. Findlay has acted and spoken well.

E. G.

⁽⁴⁾ [Not reproduced.]

⁽⁵⁾ [Not reproduced. It repeats the reported brutality of the Turks in carrying out disarmament. (F.O. 371/999. 27655/926/10/44)]

No. 164.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/999.

28681/926/10/44A.

(No. 57.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. August 3, 1910.

R. August 8, 1910.

The ill-treatment of the Serb population in the Villayet of Kossovo still continues to attract the attention of the Press; and a report was published some days ago that the Servian Government were contemplating a joint protest or common action with the Bulgarian Government in regard to the mode employed by the Turkish Authorities for the disarmament of the population in Macedonia.

Monsieur Spalaikovitch, whom I questioned the day before yesterday as to the truth of this rumour, said that no such common protest or action with Bulgaria was contemplated. Subsequently an official communiqué appeared in the Press stating that the report was without foundation seeing that, as far as Servia was concerned, all intention of interference in the affairs of the friendly Empire must be excluded.

As to the actual condition of affairs in the Vilayet, Monsieur Spalaikovitch told me that judging from all the reports of their Consular officers it was about as bad as it could be, in fact worse than at any time under the old régime. Under the pretence

of disarmament the Turks were massacring large numbers, including women and children, of the Servian population, while they left untouched the Arnauts of whom they were too much afraid to attempt to disarm them.

For the moment the Servian Government are keeping quiet and swallowing a good deal to remain on friendly terms with the Turkish Government, but I should not be surprised if the present state of apparent apathy would be prolonged if they had not the prospect of shortly entering into negotiations for a Commercial Treaty with their neighbour, in whose good graces they must stand to secure the outlet for their live Stock, to say nothing of keeping open the road for their war material.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

MINUTES.

I have no doubt that the Servians are being disarmed with just as much brutality as the Bulgarians, but Servia has more reason than Bulgaria to keep quiet and apart from that, is far less well prepared to back up remonstrances by acts.

H N
L M

The last sentence is very tangled and involved.

E. G.

No. 165.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 871/999.

Marienbad, August 5, 1910.

28401/926/10/44A.

D. 1.40 P.M.

Tel. (No. 41.) Confidential.

R. 4.45 P.M.

I had a talk with Count Aehrenthal yesterday. He alluded to invitation[s] sent by His Majesty's Government to Austria and Germany to join the four Powers in making representations at Constantinople to stop boycott. He said it was quite impossible for Austria-Hungary to accede to this invitation under present circumstances. The united pressure of the six Powers on Turkish Government would very likely have stopped the boycott, but it might also have brought down the new Turkish régime, who would have found it difficult to survive humiliation inflicted on them. The boycott was no doubt annoying, but he did not believe it would lead to a Turco-Greek war. Austria-Hungary also had had to suffer boycott, but she had not appealed to the Powers to put a stop to it.

In the course of a long conversation there were moments when Count Aehrenthal's language was not very clear, but I gathered his views to be somewhat as follows: A war between Turkey and Greece or between Turkey and Bulgaria, though regrettable evils, need not in themselves absolutely endanger the peace of Europe, for in the first instance the European Powers would be in a position to restore things to their normal state, as was done on a previous occasion, and in the second instance there would be a fair probability that both States would exhaust themselves without achieving any practical results. What Count Aehrenthal apparently dreads most is a collapse of the Government at Constantinople, followed by anarchy, a state of things which would compel Austria-Hungary to intervene to protect her interests in the Balkans, and this would divide the European Powers into opposite camps and lead to the gravest complications and dangers. To avoid this, Count Aehrenthal is determined to do everything in his power to give a helping hand to the new Turkish régime in the hope that it may yet be able to maintain itself in power. This he will do not out of

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Constantinople (as No. 199); to Sofia (as No. 16), to Athens (as No. 78); to Paris (as No. 189); to Berlin (as No. 75), to Rome (as No. 186); to St. Petersburg (as No. 414).]

sentiment but from Austro-Hungarian State reasons. He exclaimed to me, "Do you think I can sympathise with revolutionary committees and revolutionary tribunals?" Count Aehrenthal, speaking of the Bulgarian complaints as to brutal methods used for disarming the population in Bulgaria (*sic* ? Macedonia), admitted they might in part be true, but he declared the Turks had, in a kind of way, succeeded in pacifying Albania, and there was reason to hope in Macedonia they might succeed in a like way. In his opinion, pacification, even though imperfect, was better than anarchy, and he would therefore hesitate to address remonstrances to the Turkish Government. As regards Crete, Count Aehrenthal told me he would accept any arrangement agreed to by the four Powers so long as suzerainty of the Porte was not touched.

Count Aehrenthal informed me that most recent reports received from his agents at Sophia and Constantinople were reassuring, and he gave me to understand that if he were convinced war was imminent between Turkey and her neighbours he would use what influence he had at Constantinople in the cause of the maintenance of peace.

MINUTES.

Count Aehrenthal is a true *Realpolitiker* but his remarks to Sir F. Cartwright are not of much help towards a solution of the difficulty.

H. N.

There is a good deal of common-sense in Count Aehrenthal's remarks, especially in regard to disarmament.

L. M.
E. G.

No. 166.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Findlay.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/999.

28059/926/10/44A.

Tel. (No. 15.)

Foreign Office, August 5, 1910, 3-30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 33.⁽²⁾

The Turkish Ambassador has addressed me a note calling attention to the appeal of the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t to the Powers for their diplomatic intervention at Constantinople, explaining the objects of their action in Macedonia and disclaiming any acts of severity.

I have replied⁽³⁾ that on the date of receiving the Turkish Note, I had received no such official invitation from the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t but that the Acting M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] had since suggested our good offices at Constantinople. I thought it right to inform the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t in a friendly and unofficial manner that, we had received independent accounts of acts of undue severity accompanying disarmament and that if these reports are borne out by Talaat Bey's enquiry, of which I was glad to hear, I hoped that in the interests of the new régime greater moderation would be used.

You should impress on the M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] the importance of proceeding with extreme caution and taking no step which might seriously endanger relations with Turkey.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was drafted by Mr. L. Mallet and appears as part of a minute on Mr. Findlay's telegram, No. 33. Sir Edward Grey's minute reproduced here appears immediately below it on the minute paper. The phrase "of which I was glad to hear" in the third paragraph of the telegram was added in Sir Edward Grey's hand. The telegram was repeated to Constantinople (No. 196); to Paris (No. 187); to Rome (No. 184); to St. Petersburg (No. 412); to Berlin (No. 74); to Vienna (No. 45).]

⁽²⁾ [Mr. Findlay, in his telegram No. 33 of August 2, 1910, D. 2-30 P.M., R. 5 P.M. (F.O. 371/999. 28059/926/10/44A), had represented that unless Turkish outrages in Macedonia ceased, most dangerous complications would ensue. Copies of this telegram were sent to the Embassies with Sir Edward Grey's reply. *cp.* immediately preceding note ⁽¹⁾.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. infra*, p. 193, No. 169.]

MINUTE.

As to intervention at Constantinople I am not disposed to take any without Germany and Austria, and to reply, when a reply is necessary, that we have once suggested representations in the interest of peace and that Germany and Austria considered there was no occasion and that though prepared to join in a representation we cannot propose one without some intimation that these Powers have seen reason to alter their opinion. But no reply should be given without referring to me. We must not let it appear that we were keen to help Greece and reluctant to help Bulgaria.

E. G.
4 8 10.

No. 167.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, August 5, 1910.*

D. 5.50 P.M.
R. 8.30 P.M.

Tel. Private and Confidential.⁽¹⁾

Emperor told me today in strict confidence that Mr. Isvolsky would before the end of the year be appointed Ambassador in Paris. H[is] M[ajesty] said that he hoped that the King and H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] would understand that this implied no change of policy whatever. As long as he was on the throne, H[is] M[ajesty] added, he would remain a firm friend of England and no change as regards G[reat] Britain would occur in the foreign policy of Russia.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

No. 168.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 971/980.

29488/28400/10/38.

(No. 334.)

Sir,

*St. Petersburg, D. August 6, 1910.**R. August 15, 1910.*

I had the honour of a farewell audience of the Emperor yesterday, and His Majesty was pleased to invite the members of the Embassy Staff to a luncheon which was given on that occasion and at which Monsieur Iswolsky, Monsieur Sazonow, and the principal Court officials were also present.

Previous to the luncheon I was received privately by the Emperor and Empress. I had before, during and after luncheon conversations with His Majesty the Emperor, which naturally ranged over a variety of subjects. In respect to political matters the chief features of His Majesty's remarks were his oft-repeated statements of his determination to maintain and develop the friendly relations between Great Britain and Russia, and I gathered that His Majesty regards an amicable understanding with Great Britain as one of the chief bases of the foreign policy of Russia. During my residence at St. Petersburg His Majesty has never wavered on this point, and I am confident that so long as a reciprocal feeling prevails with His Majesty's Government complete trust may be reposed in the intentions of the Emperor. His Majesty was especially emphatic on the point yesterday, and at His Majesty's request I promised to convey his assurances to the King and to His Majesty's Government.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Sir Edward Grey to Tewfik Pasha.

F.O. 371/999.
27806/926/10/44.

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 6, 1910.

The Sec[retary] of State for Foreign Affairs presents his comp[limen]ts to the Turkish Ambassador and begs to acknowledge the receipt of H[is] E[xc]ellency's communications of the 31st ult[imo]⁽¹⁾ on the subject of the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t's action as regards measures taken by the Turkish Government to effect the disarmament of the inhabitants of Macedonia.

On the date of the receipt of H[is] E[xc]ellency's letter and memorandum no official communication had been received from the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t of the nature indicated, but since then the Bulgarian Acting M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] has spoken to His Majesty's Minister at Sofia expressing the hope that the Powers will use their good offices at Constant[in]ople.

While disclaiming any intention to intervene in the internal affairs of Turkey, Sir E. Grey thinks it only fair to inform the Sublime Porte in an unofficial and friendly manner that a telegram from one of H[is] M[ajesty's] Consular Officers in Macedonia has reported that extreme severity has accompanied the disarmament and that many peasants have fled to the hills.

Sir E. Grey is glad to hear that Talaat Bey is prosecuting an enquiry into the matter, and is convinced that, if the reports are confirmed, greater moderation will be used, as it is unnecessary to dwell upon the delicacy of the situation in Macedonia and the necessity, in the best interests of Constitutional Gov[ernmen]t in Turkey, of governing with justice.

[I have, &c.

E. GREY.]

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp 183-5, No. 162, and *encl*]

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/999.
28524/926/10/44A.
Tel. (No. 44.)

Marienbad, August 7, 1910.

D. 4.50 P.M.

R. 5 P.M.

Bulgaria. Your telegram No. 44.⁽¹⁾

I understand that Bulgarian Prime Minister has had an interview with King Ferdinand in Vienna, and that King is reported to have instructed his Prime Minister to act with moderation and to have declared that he would have no complications at the present moment. The King apparently shows no desire to return to Bulgaria just now, and this is considered here to be an unfavourable sign.

I cannot ascertain with any certainty whether the King saw Count Aehrenthal ten days ago when the former passed through Marienbad, but the probability is that he saw him. I am informed on fairly good authority that Count Aehrenthal spoke very strongly to the King about the necessity of Bulgaria keeping quiet. Count Aehrenthal has of late expressed himself to persons here as very dissatisfied with the King.

⁽¹⁾ [This is the repetition to Vienna of Mr. Findlay's telegram No. 38 of August 2, 1910, *cp. supra*, p. 191, No. 166, *note* (2).]

Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs, who is here, told me yesterday that he did not believe that Bulgaria would proceed to extremes, and that there was much bluff and mere talk. According to him, they wish to force the hand of Europe to intervene at Constantinople on their behalf.⁽²⁾

MINUTE.

A Servian statesman naturally says disagreeable things about Bulgaria.

H. N.
L. M.
E. G.

(²) [This telegram was sent to Sofia (as No 17); to Constantinople (as No. 200).]

No. 171.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, August 9, 1910.

Isvolsky came this afternoon to say goodbye as he is leaving St. Petersburg the day after tomorrow and we shall not have an opportunity of seeing each other again, as he spends tomorrow with the Emperor at Peterhof. He took the occasion of reviewing the policy of Russia in Far, Middle and Near East. I shall, I hope, see you next week, as I believe we made an appointment for the 19th, but perhaps you would like to have his statements on record. As regards the Far East, he observed that he had noticed a certain "note d'inquiétude" in London that the door would not be kept quite open under the new arrangement with Japan. He wished that I would remove any apprehensions on that score. The door would be kept open, and Russia had no desire to secure any monopolies. All she wished was that she should be left in enjoyment of what she possessed, that peace in the Far East should be assured, and that her relations with China should be placed on a thoroughly friendly footing. In the recent Sungari agreement Russia has been as conciliatory as possible towards China and had given proofs of her good will. At the same time she could not admit the pretention of China that the Portsmouth Treaty⁽²⁾ had abrogated all Treaties between China and Russia. During the last 3 or 4 years China had changed her attitude towards Russia, and had become suspicious and unfriendly. He desired to see the former friendly relations re-established: Russia and China had too many points of contact to remain on a footing of mistrust and antagonism. The Treaties with China would expire next year, and in the negotiations for fresh Conventions Russia would show her desire to live on terms of peace and amity. In fact he would like by some means or other to bring China into the Russo-Japanese Agreement, and a combination of France, England, Russia, Japan and China was an object worth striving for. Russia had no intention of selling railways to American financiers; and her political interests were of such importance in the Far East that she must be careful not to endanger them. There was nothing in the Far Eastern policy of Russia which should cause any doubts or hesitation in London.

As to Tibet he would await developments of the situation there, but in regard to that country also he considered that no differences need arise between England and Russia. He observed that he thought that the prohibition as to scientific missions might very well be allowed to lapse. Russia had no intention of sending any mission and it seemed to him "a little childish" to maintain the prohibition.

In regard to Persia he remarked that affairs were in such a complex state that it

(¹) [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

(²) [The text of this Treaty is given in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. IV, pp. 107-11, No. 101.]

was difficult to see what would be the ultimate outcome. A policy from day to day was the only possible one, dealing with each new situation as it arose, and the two Governments keeping in close touch with each other. He was still anxious to withdraw from Kasvin, but a favourable occasion to do so seemed always to be postponed. He did not attribute much importance to the recent action of the German Minister, which had proved to be abortive and was ill judged.

As to the Near East he thought there were several clouds in the sky. The policy of Russia was to maintain the status quo and to place no difficulties in the way of the new regime in Turkey. Peace was essential to Russia for the next three or four years, and I could rest assured that she would take no step which could in any way, directly or indirectly, embroil matters. There were several uncertain factors. Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey herself. Turkey might wish to cause difficulties, though to his mind it would be folly for her to risk any adventures. The attitude of Bulgaria was not very clear, while to Iswolsky's mind Achrenthal is of course the evil genius who may have dark schemes. There were questions in the Near East which could not but cause uneasiness. Of course if the new regime in Turkey were to crumble up, and a general dislocation ensue Russia could not possibly remain indifferent. It was perfectly certain that Russia if Turkey were to break up, could never allow anyone but herself to possess Constantinople. But he trusted the new regime would consolidate its position, and that there would be no events which would create complications. His mind, with Greece, Crete and Macedonia in an unrestful condition, was however not easy, and the outlook did not appear to him to be promising.

As to home affairs Russia had made a wonderful recovery financially and economically, and the Duma was safe. He was not quite so well satisfied with the recovery in the military forces. A great deal had undoubtedly been done, but he differed from the Emperor and others who considered that all that was possible had been done and done in the right way. He thought that Russia would not have her full military strength thoroughly efficient for a few years to come and that was the reason why he considered peace was so essential for her. He himself would shortly leave the Foreign Office. Sazonow in all probability would be his successor, and would continue his policy. The Emperor too would not swerve from the good relations established with England. He doubted if Stolypine would remain for very long as Prime Minister, and Kokowtsoff he hoped would succeed him. The latter was a clear-headed wide-minded man and had gained the confidence of the Duma. He would be the best successor to be found.

I have jotted down the chief points of Iswolsky's remarks and when we meet I might enlarge on them if you wished.

Y[ou]rs sincerely,
A. NICOLSON.

No. 172.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/1013.

30404/30404/10/44A.

(No. 137.) Confidential.

Sir,

Marienbad, D. August 12, 1910.

R. August 28, 1910.

I have the honour to report that M. Milovanovitch, the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs, called upon me a few days ago, and that I had a long conversation with him on Balkan matters.

M. Milovanovitch began by saying that public opinion in the Balkans was in a state of fermentation, and that a general restlessness existed among the various races

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

in that part of the world. No one believed that things could remain much longer in their state; either the new Turkish régime would throw out roots and consolidate itself, or it would collapse, and that the latter would happen was the general belief prevailing in the Near East. In the first case the Balkan States would probably resign themselves to the inevitable and live as best they could with a powerful Turkey well established in Europe, but never, said M. Milovanovitch, would the Christian populations of the Balkans accept such a solution as a satisfactory one, and they would never abandon their hope that the day might come when a better state of things would be brought about. Personally, M. Milovanovitch said to me, he did not believe that the Young Turkish régime had any great vitality in itself. He thought it would fail because it was not a real Mahometan movement, and because—to the reappearance of corruption—must be added the prospect of financial chaos ahead. Things were not going on well at Constantinople and the moment a sign of this appeared all the Balkan States were on the watch for coming events. Hence the restlessness which was being shown at this moment; but M. Milovanovitch added that, unless the Turkish troops committed outrages in Macedonia, the European Powers could remain assured that neither Bulgaria nor Serbia would move against Turkey. At this point M. Milovanovitch stated to me that Serbia's present policy was to show great consideration and friendship for Turkey, and that, so long as the present Turkish régime could maintain itself in power, he would pursue such a policy. He stated to me that when he arrived in Marienbad he immediately called upon Count Aehrenthal, whose first question to him was; "How do you stand with Turkey?" On his replying that Serbia's relations with the Porte were very good, Count Aehrenthal said that he was delighted to hear it, and that the only advice he could give to the small States was, in their own interests to cultivate amicable relations with the Ottoman Government.

I enquired of M. Milovanovitch whether he had any confirmation that outrages had been committed by Turkish troops in the Albanian campaign. He replied that it was very unfortunate that the Turkish Government had made use of the old brutal methods in the process of disarming the Albanian population. He said to me that the Servian Government had instructed leading Servians living in Albania, and especially the Servian schoolmasters there, to give every assistance to the Turkish army, and, when necessary, to act as their guides over the country. In spite of the good-will shown by the Servian population, the Turkish authorities had brutally ill-treated a number of Servian schoolmasters and also women, and this had produced an unpleasant impression in Servia. Another source of complaint was that the Turkish troops were disarming the peaceful population in the plains and valleys, but the hardy Albanian mountaineers who had gone to the hills were left in possession of their arms for the simple reason that the Turkish troops found it inconvenient to pursue them in their inaccessible mountains. The result was that the peaceful population would, as soon as the troops withdrew, be left at the mercy of these armed brigands. Nevertheless, M. Milovanovitch said, he would continue to cultivate good relations with the Porte.

I asked M. Milovanovitch what he thought would be the effect of an outbreak of a Turco-Greek war on the situation in the Balkans. He told me that the first effect would be that every State would get its army ready and then wait for possible eventualities. He said the vital question would be whether Turkey crushed Greece by a staggering blow, or whether Greece would be able, by carrying on a guerilla warfare, to hamper and delay the advance of the Turkish army into Thessaly for a little time. If the Greeks were able to do so, it would give time to the Balkan States to come to an understanding with each other as to how they should act in the crisis, and it would also have a remarkable effect on public opinion in the peninsula, for if the Greeks could show that they were in a position partially to check the advancing Turks, it would be difficult to restrain Bulgaria and Serbia from joining the fray and rushing into Macedonia, regardless of consequences. The important point, according to M. Milovanovitch, would be that Greece should be able to resist for a few weeks, just long enough to give time to Serbia and Bulgaria, and possibly to Roumania, to come to

terms with regard to a general scheme for the partition of Macedonia. I pointed out to M. Milovanovitch that the Powers might probably interfere to put things as they were before the outbreak of hostilities. M. Milovanovitch replied that it was now a dogma among the Christian populations of the Near East that once Christian territory had been recovered from the domination of the Turks, Europe would never allow it to fall back into the hands of its former masters. It was therefore generally believed that if Turkey showed signs of weakness the best policy for the Balkan States to pursue would be to risk everything and to go for Macedonia, whether Austria-Hungary or Roumania threatened the rear of Servia and Bulgaria or not, for it would always be hoped that Russia and the European Powers would hold Austria's hands from striking Servia, and that a Roumanian attack could be bought off by a rectification of frontiers in the Dobrudja, or at the worst by a surrender of Silistria. M. Milovanovitch believed that making Salonica a free town and port, with guarantees for the unimpeded transit of Austrian trade to it, would satisfy Austria-Hungary; and that all that Roumania asked for was a more or less parallel aggrandizement of the three Balkan States. If the increase of Bulgarian territory in Macedonia were not too large, M. Milovanovitch thought that a cession of a moderate extent of Bulgarian territory near the Dobrudja would keep Roumania quiet.

I enquired of M. Milovanovitch what was the opinion in the Balkan States with regard to the Turkish army. He replied that he was firmly convinced that the Servian and Bulgarian armies combined, especially with the assistance of Greece, could do more than hold their own against the Turkish army; and that if they penetrated into Macedonia, they would be fighting under more favourable circumstances than the Turks because they would have the sympathies of the great mass of the population with them. He told me that he had had reports from Servians in Albania, who had watched the Turkish military operations there, to the effect that the Turkish officers were anything but good; they seemed to show great incapacity, and much jealousy existed between the commanders. The men were no doubt good but they had shown no enthusiasm of any kind.

In conclusion, M. Milovanovitch, talking of the Turkish officers, said to me that the higher ones were all pro-Germans, and that this fact tended to make the present régime—which depended so much on the army for its maintenance of power—lean upon Germany and show great consideration for Austria-Hungary. M. Milovanovitch mentioned to me that recently, when he was in Constantinople, he had sat next Shefket Pasha at a dinner, and that the latter, on learning that M. Milovanovitch spoke German fluently, expressed his delight and continued his conversation in that language.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

NOTE.

M. Milovanovitch's policy, if not very noble, is prudent. It consists in truckling to Turkey in spite of all the barbarity which the Turks may inflict on Servians in Macedonia, until the moment arrives when, Turkey being in difficulties with Greece, Servia with Bulgaria and perhaps Roumania, can fall on her flank and despoil her of Macedonia.

He has no high opinion either of the Turkish army or of the new régime.

H. N.
L. M.
E. G.

No. 173.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 871/1012.
29845/29845/10/44A.
Tel. (No. 46.)

Marienbad, August 12, 1910.
D. 2.50 P.M.
R. 12.5 P.M.

Macedonia.

Turkish Grand Vizier is expected here on Sunday, and will be received by Count Aehrenthal on his arrival. I learn from Count Aehrenthal that he intends to tell Grand Vizier that Austria-Hungary and the other Powers sympathise with new Turkish régime and are ready to give it a helping hand, but, in return, Turkish Government must not render their task impossible. He will urgently advise Grand Vizier to do his utmost to avoid recurrence of any outrages in carrying out disarmament in Macedonia, for it would be impossible long to hide outrages from knowledge of consuls and the European press, and the latter would work up public opinion of the world against Turkey. The Powers would find it difficult to resist pressure of public opinion, and intervention might therefore become necessary. Aehrenthal will impress on Grand Vizier that Austro-Hungarian Government will not have disturbance of the peace in the Balkans.

I have an impression that return of King of Bulgaria to Sophia was due to Count Aehrenthal's advice, and that he has informed Bulgarian Government that they must keep quiet.

MINUTE.

Count Aehrenthal's proposed advice is very sensible and should have an excellent effect if only it does not come too late.

H. N.
L. M.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Constantinople (as No. 204); to Sofia (as No. 12); to St Petersburg (as No. 482); to Paris (as No. 201); to Rome (as No. 198); to Berlin (as No. 81).]

No. 174.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 871/999.
29873/926/10/44A.
Tel. (No. 47.)

Marienbad, August 16, 1910.
D. 5.20 P.M.
R. 9 P.M.

Bulgaria.

I saw Count Aehrenthal this morning and found him cheerful in regard to situation in the Near East. His information convinced him that Bulgaria would not move, and that Bulgarian Government, for internal reasons, were trying to frighten Europe with threats of war, firstly, to show that their patriotism was equal to that of their opponents, and secondly, in the hope that Powers would hold them back. Count Aehrenthal was opposed to intervention by the Powers in the present dispute between Bulgaria and Turkey, and he had advised Bulgarian Government either to make arrangements for disposing of refugees in Bulgaria or of negotiating directly with Turkey for their repatriation.

Count Aehrenthal said that he had consular reports which tended to show that Turkey was really succeeding in disarming Macedonians and that brutality complaint was much exaggerated. Effective disarmament, when carried out, would do more

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 209); to Rome (as No. 206); to St. Petersburg (as No. 414); to Berlin (as No. 85); to Constantinople (as No. 210); to Sofia (as No. 20).]

than anything to pacify Macedonia, and therefore in principle it ought to meet with sympathy of the Powers.

Count Aehrenthal saw Grand Vizier yesterday, and spoke to him in sense of my telegram No. 46.⁽²⁾ He had done his best to impress upon him necessity for moderation and avoiding all excesses in Macedonia. Count Aehrenthal said to me that in his opinion King Ferdinand was playing with fire and was at the bottom of Bulgaria's tortuous policy lately, and he thought His Majesty's long absences from his country were detrimental to the peace of the Balkans. Count Aehrenthal added that the King, when in Vienna last December, tried to persuade him of necessity for Austria-Hungary to pursue a more active policy in the Balkans. Count Aehrenthal declared to me that he then told the King that he was for non-intervention in the Near East, and that Bulgaria would run great [group omitted: ? risk] if she caused trouble, and that in her interests the only policy for her to pursue was to cultivate the best relations with Turkey.

MINUTES.

It is Greece which is the real danger, as the Turks would like an easy capture of Thessaly which they could hold until the Cretan question were settled

Is it worth pointing this out to Sir F. Cartwright?

Not worth while I think Aehrenthal won't be moved

L. M.

E. G.

(2) [v immediately preceding document.]

No. 175.

Mr. Findlay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/834.

30462/30462/10/7.

(No. 107.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sofia, D. August 18, 1910.

R. August 22, 1910.

I have the honour to report that I hear from one of my Colleagues that the Greek Military Attaché, who has been in Sofia the last few weeks, had an interview recently with General Fitcheff, Chief of the Bulgarian General Staff, at which the former proposed that a Military Convention should be concluded between Greece and Bulgaria, to come into force in case of war.

In informing my Colleague of this proposal, General Fitcheff asked him his opinion as to the advisability of concluding such a Convention. My Colleague replied that the idea appeared to him a dangerous one and that such a Convention was unnecessary since, if a war actually arose, the interests of Greece and Bulgaria would probably in any case draw the two countries together. General Fitcheff appeared to agree with this view.

A copy of this despatch will be sent to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople by next messenger.

I have, &c.

M. DE C. FINDLAY.

Mr. Findlay to Sir Edward Grey

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Sir Edward Grey,

Sofia, August 18, 1910.

You will gather from the despatches which I am sending home by Messenger today

1. That about June last serious negotiations took place between the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t and the Committee of Union and Progress at Salonica, and that these negotiations failed.

2. That the Bulgarians accuse the Turks of carrying out the disarmament in Macedonia both with partiality, and extreme brutality, for which the Turkish synonym appears to be necessary pressure. The Bulgarian accusations are supported to a certain extent by the Reports of H.M. Consular officers at Salonica and Üscup, and by the presence in Bulgaria of over 2,000 Refugees who have fled before the approach of the detachments entrusted with the disarmament, leaving their crops and families. This would appear to show that the accusations against the Turkish Authorities are not without serious foundation.

3. That the Turks profess to regard the disarmament as the necessary preparation for the advent of the Millennium, while the Bulgars regard it as a preliminary to a change in the ethnic character of Macedonia which, they assert, it is the deliberate policy of the Committee to bring about. They declare their determination, and on this point all Bulgarian parties seem to be unanimous, to prevent this change being effected even at the cost of a war which they admit might check the progress of Bulgaria for a generation.

4. That the important question is whether the Mussulmans, including the 'Mohadjers,' or immigrants are being disarmed. The Bulgarians say the latter are being armed (so does Mr. Cons[ul] Gen[eral] Lamb) and the former are not being disarmed. (Mr. Hough seems to think that a simple denial from a Mussulman is accepted.)

As you are aware, in Macedonia and other districts of Turkey, the unarmed population tend either to become the serfs of their armed neighbours, or to emigrate. This is what the Bulgarians anticipate.

5. That Assim Bey has been doing his very best . . .⁽²⁾ to induce his Gov[ernmen]t to moderate their methods. Hitherto he has never failed in carrying his point, but I fear that his influence is on the wane, and that Talaat Bey and the Vali of Kossovo, not to speak of Dr. Nazim of Salonica, are among his opponents. If Assim resigns and is replaced by one of the forward party, the result will be disastrous, and I should not be surprised if there was war within six months.

What Æhrenthal says is partly true. The motives of the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t are mixed, and party considerations have something to do with their action. But I am convinced that though another Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t might easily be more skilful, their general policy would be practically the same.

The fact is, that unless Turkey is sufficiently strong and sufficiently capable to make life tolerable for the Christians in Macedonia, there is only one solution of the Macedonian question, and that is war, which will inevitably result sooner or later. I doubt whether even war would settle the question finally unless the Bulgarians were successful.

From what I have said you will gather that my opinion is that the present situation requires very serious consideration, and careful handling.

It is owing to this conviction that I have ventured to offer advice to the Bulgarian Ministers and to Assim Bey, whenever I saw that it might be accepted. My efforts

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 4]

⁽²⁾ [A few words of a personal character are here omitted.]

have been chiefly directed to the repatriation of the Refugees and to the prevention of a further influx. I hope that in doing so I have been acting in accordance with your wishes. . . .⁽³⁾

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

M. DE C. FINDLAY.

⁽³⁾ [The rest of the letter is concerned with the question of a special mission to visit Bucharest, Belgrade and Sofia to announce the accession of His Majesty, King George V]

No. 177.

Mr. O'Brien to Sir Eduard Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/980.

32988/32988/10/38.

(No. 363.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. August 30, 1910.

R. September 12, 1910.

It will be within your recollection that about a year ago the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs showed a good deal of uneasiness at a rumour then current that Turkey was negotiating for the purchase of two battle-ships which had been ordered in England for the Brazilian Government. M. Iswolsky more than once asked His Majesty's Government privately to make enquiries as to the truth of the rumour, and he stated frankly to me on one occasion that Russia had no wish to see the balance of naval power in the Levant altered by an increase in the Turkish fleet. His Excellency's apprehensions on that score have now been to a large extent realised. No doubt the two German battle-ships just bought by the Ottoman Government will not, even with the addition of the two cruisers of which the purchase is contemplated, bring the Turkish fleet to a position of equality with the Russian Black Sea squadron, which includes eight battleships. Still it is evident that the acquisition by Turkey of a Navy which, trained under British officers, will be capable of measuring itself against the Russian Black Sea fleet, has become a practical possibility with which Russia must reckon henceforward.

The reappearance of Turkey as a naval Power has an obvious bearing on Russia's policy in regard to the question of the Straits. For the past quarter of a century Russia has held the undisputed command of the Black Sea. In case of a war with Turkey in which the latter should not be allied with a naval Power, Russia had the complete command of the lines of attack from her military base on the Black Sea Coast to the Ottoman possessions in Europe and Asia Minor: and it is hardly too much to say that that circumstance dominated the whole of her relations with the Ottoman Empire. In these conditions Russia felt no pressing need for the liberty to bring war-ships from the Baltic to reinforce her Black Sea fleet. The existing arrangements in regard to the Straits were inconvenient to her rather because they prevented her from using her Black Sea Ships in other waters, as she desired to do for instance in the course of the Japanese war. But the position becomes completely altered as soon as Turkey challenges Russian supremacy in the Black Sea. While Turkey is at liberty to bring as many warships into the Black Sea as she can raise money to buy, Russia will have no alternative, so long as the present Treaty arrangements are maintained, but to build ships in the Black Sea ports which she will be debarred from using in other parts of the world. Meanwhile she will also be building ships in the Baltic, but she will be precluded from bringing them to the Black Sea, where she may perhaps have the most need of them. It

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Admiralty and to the Director of Military Operations.]

is evident that such a situation is irksome not to say intolerable; and more particularly so at a moment when Russia is entering upon the execution of a comprehensive scheme for the reconstruction of her fleet.

Having regard to these considerations there is a cool impertinence about the article recently published by the Young Turk paper "Tanin," which could hardly fail to cause considerable irritation in this country. The "Tanin" suggested that, in order to avoid a ruinous competition in naval armaments Russia should withdraw her Black Sea Fleet to the Baltic and the Black Sea should be neutralised. In other words Russia is invited to return without a struggle to the condition of things imposed upon her after the Crimean war, and to abandon the aim which she has steadily kept before her since the time of the Turkish campaign of 1877-78. It would be ludicrous to suppose that the suggestion of the Young Turk organ could be entertained here for a moment; but there is some truth in the idea underlying it that the creation of a Turkish navy furnishes reasons why Russia might reconsider her position in regard to the Straits question. Of course the most desirable solution of that question in the eyes of Russian diplomacy was and remains that the Black Sea should be treated as a Russo-Turkish lake of which the access is free for the war-ships of the two Powers and for no others. Failing the possibility of attaining that ideal there have hitherto, while Russia was supreme in the Black Sea, been sufficient grounds for Russian statesmen to prefer the *status quo* to a solution which would open the Dardanelles to the warships of all Powers in peace time. The *status quo* had the advantage of keeping the warships of the European Powers out of the Black Sea and Russia had no great need to bring her own ships into it. If however her supremacy in these waters is in danger, that need may become so serious as to outweigh Russia's objections to the admission of the flags of European Powers to the Black Sea in peace time. As for the eventuality of her being at war with Turkey it does not seem that the real course of things would be altered in any way by the abolition of the Treaty stipulations which now close the Straits.

For these reasons the possibility cannot, I think, be left out of sight that if Turkey perseveres with the development of her navy it may become the policy of Russia to procure the opening of the Straits to the war-ships of all Powers; a solution of the question which was favourably considered by Prince Gortchakoff both in 1853 and in 1871.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

MINUTES.

An interesting despatch, but the question is still one of academic interest only because it will be long before the Turkish navy is fit to cope with a foe even of the calibre of the Russian Black Sea fleet.

At present the Turks have neither the officers to navigate and fight, nor the crews to man the ships which they have bought from the Germans, nor are they likely to for some time to come.

H. N.

Sept. 12, 1910.

R. P. M.

The Russian Gov[ernmen]t are aware, from what passed in 1908,⁽²⁾ of the readiness of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] to agree to the abrogation of Art[icle] I of the Convention of Paris. I expect that the difficulty will come from Germany and Austria who will pose as the champions of Turkey in this question or try to blackmail Russia. See 39841 penultimate §.⁽³⁾

L. M.

E. G.

⁽²⁾ [The text of Sir Edward Grey's memorandum on the Straits Question of October 14, 1908, is given in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, p. 441, No. 377, *cp.* also *ib.*, pp. 451-2, No. 387. For further references *v. ib.*, Subject Index. *sub* STRAITS—BOSPHORUS AND DARDANELLES. *cp. infra*, p. 311, *Ed. note.*]

⁽³⁾ [It has been found impossible to trace this reference]

No. 178.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/980.
 32990/32988/10/38.
 (No. 367.)

St. Petersburg, D. September 4, 1910.

Sir,

R. September 12, 1910.

In my despatch No. 363 of the 30th ultimo⁽²⁾ I had the honour to submit to you some observations regarding the way in which an increase of the Turkish fleet is likely to react on Russia's policy in regard to the Dardanelles. It is scarcely necessary to add that the recent purchases of warships by Turkey have attracted immediate and unfavourable attention here, and that signs exist already that a further development of Turkey's naval strength will prove a serious obstacle to any real improvement in the relations between the two countries.

As you are aware the Duma is understood to have adopted during the last session a plan of naval construction submitted to it by the Government which will involve the expenditure of some 50-60 millions sterling in the course of the next ten or fifteen years. Russia is thus at the present moment entering somewhat tardily upon the task of rebuilding the fleet which she lost in the Japanese war. The difficulty for her of framing a comprehensive naval policy with due regard for her interests in the Pacific, the Baltic and the Black Sea has always been very great. She has however hitherto had the advantage that she could maintain her supremacy in the Black Sea at comparatively little cost. Her chief preoccupations lay in the Baltic and in the Far East. If in addition to other calls upon her resources she now has to engage in a competition of armaments with Turkey the task before her increases greatly in complexity and magnitude.

It may be assumed that Russia will consider the maintenance of her supremacy in the Black Sea to be of such paramount importance that she will make whatever sacrifices are necessary to achieve it. But her finances which are just recovering from the effects of the Japanese war will suffer under the additional strain. She does not possess in her Black Sea ports the appliances necessary for turning out large ships rapidly. It will be irritating to her to expend millions in constructing ships which may be destined to remain imprisoned for their lifetime in the Black Sea basin; and it may moreover become necessary for her to spend large sums on the fortifications of her Black Sea ports which she could hitherto to a certain extent neglect. It must be said also that Russians have so long been accustomed to consider themselves the sole masters in the Black Sea that they would be inclined to regard the appearance of a Turkish fleet in those waters as a gratuitous kind of challenge, and strongly to resent the increased effort and expenditure which it imposed upon them.

For all these reasons it may be expected that if Turkey perseveres in the development of her navy the result will be as time goes on to produce in this country a feeling of resentment and unfriendliness towards the Turks which does not at present exist. It may also be anticipated, without looking unnecessarily far ahead, that if this question becomes acute, the fact that the young Turkish navy is being organised by British admirals will make an unfavourable impression in Russia.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

MINUTES.

The remark at the end is worth considering and the time may come when the persistent unfriendliness of the Turks may oblige us to decline to lend them any more naval officers.

H. N.

Sept. 12, 1910.

R. P. M.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Admiralty with Mr. O'Beirne's despatch No. 371 of September 6, *v. infra*, p. 206, No. 180, and to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

If a British Admiral does not organize the Turkish fleet, a German Admiral will be called in, who will push matters on with greater speed than we should

L. M.

We can discuss it frankly with Russia when necessary.

E G

No. 179.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/885.

33023/33023/10/13.

(No. 137.) Confidential.

Rome, D. September 4, 1910.

Sir,

R. September 12, 1910.

I have the honour to report that the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who returned to Rome late last night from Ischl, telephoned to me to ask me to come and see him this morning.

I found His Excellency in very good spirits in spite of a mild return of the gout. He began at once of his own initiative to speak of his visit to Count d'Aehrenthal, who had, he said, made an excellent impression on him. All that he had said had been characterised by sound common sense and frankness. Their discussions, as might have been anticipated, were largely concerned with the ways and means of eliminating the friction so constantly excited to the detriment of cordial relations by minor frontier incidents. This matter and the policy of the two countries in Balkan questions had formed the staple of their conversations, and His Excellency assured me that the communiqué which had been made to the press, a translation of which will be found in my despatch No. 135 of yesterday's date,⁽¹⁾ was a trustworthy document and accurately defined the complete identity of view which they entertained as to the necessity for preserving the status quo, supporting the new régime in Turkey, and preventing a breach of that peace which was a common and vital interest. Count d'Aehrenthal seems to have succeeded in convincing the Marquis di San Giuliano that Austria-Hungary had no aggressive designs, and that there was nothing in her Balkan policy to cause misgivings to Italy.

He told him that Austria-Hungary and Germany were firmly determined to adhere to their line of not directly intervening in the Cretan question, or in issues which arose out of the Cretan question, but Count d'Aehrenthal had assured him that if left to do so in their own time and way, without the appearance of specific intervention, they would indirectly support the action of the Protecting Powers by counsels of moderation at Constantinople.

Having regard to these assurances, His Excellency said that it would in his opinion be a great mistake to endeavour to induce the Turkish Government to address representations regarding the elections to the Greek National Assembly, such as had been made to the Protecting Powers, to Germany and Austria-Hungary also. Let us, he said, look at facts as they are. The only point with which the Turkish Government was concerned in the Greek elections was the return of Cretan nominees. The whole issue arose out of the Cretan question. The two Powers would certainly refuse to be drawn in. There was no doubt about it that their influence was at the present moment the dominant one at Constantinople. Their refusal to touch the question would not strengthen the position of the Protecting Powers. The attempt to involve them would certainly cause irritation and would probably be utilized to renew the absurd outcry, to which the continental nations were always prepared to lend themselves, against the subtle intrigues of British diplomacy. After his recent conversa-

(¹) [Not reproduced, as the tenour is sufficiently indicated. The *communiqué* merely asserted the identity of views of the two Ministers and described the policy of the two Cabinets as the maintenance of peace and the *status quo*. (F.O. 371/917. 33021/31296/10/22.) *cp.* the *Times*, September 2, 1910.]

tions with Count d'Aehrenthal it would hardly be possible for him to support any such proposal. He had personally already, he understood, made himself somewhat unpopular in Germany by declining to entertain the application of the Persian Government to sanction the employment of Italian subjects for the reform of the Persian gendarmerie, and he must not put too great a strain on the forbearance of allies.

I gathered that Hakki Pasha had recently received from Count d'Aehrenthal such friendly advice as he professed his readiness to administer, as indeed Sir Fairfax Cartwright has reported, and I also learned that no reference had been made in Austria by the Grand Vizier to the question of the capitulations, which the Marquis di San Giuliano gathered, Count d'Aehrenthal was in no hurry to have raised. On the other hand Hakki Pasha had earnestly insisted on the necessity for sanctioning an increase in the Customs duties in Turkey to which measure we were represented as being the principal obstacle.⁽²⁾

While the Marquis maintained, as I have reported above, that the influence of Germany and Austria-Hungary was at the present time in the ascendant at Constantinople he was convinced after his interview with the Austrian Minister that there was no foundation whatever for the rumours which had been current in the Press that Turkey was gravitating in the direction of some closer association with the Triple Alliance.

One other observation was volunteered by his Excellency namely that Count d'Aehrenthal had in conversation with him paid a very high tribute to the personality and services of Sir Fairfax Cartwright in Vienna. He had at a moment of tension and difficulty correctly appreciated the attitude of Austria-Hungary and his loyal endeavours to clear away misunderstandings and restore relations of confidence had been of great value.

The general impression I derived from my conversation with the Minister was that he was well satisfied with the results of his visit and felt that the personal relations which he had now established with Count d'Aehrenthal would be of real service in helping them to deal with the difficulties which from time to time inevitably arise between the two countries which circumstance has united in alliance in spite of a long tradition of far from cordial sentiment.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

MINUTES.

In view of this, I recognize that it would be useless to sound the 3 Powers about a Conference on Crete. Italy would refuse. It seems to me, therefore, that our best course will be to work through Italy, who ought to be able to remind Austria of Count Aehrenthal's assurances to support the Protecting Powers at Constantinople, when trouble arose.

This need not prevent Sir G. Lowther nor you, in conversation with Tewfik Pasha—if Rifat Pasha or H[is] E[xc]ellency reverts to the question of a Conference—from letting it be known unofficially that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] do not stand in the way of a conference, if all the Powers are consulted—but that the 4 Powers alone cannot settle a European question of this nature, which may easily involve issues which concern all the signatories of the Berlin Treaty.

Count Aehrenthal professes to be friendly to Great Britain. Crete will be a very good touch-stone of the genuineness of his professions. Perhaps something might be written to Sir F. Cartwright privately on this subject.

L. M.

Sept[ember] 13.

I will write to Sir F. Cartwright.⁽³⁾ There will be no harm in having ready for use if need be the statement by Count Goluchowski in 1906 and a similar one, if it was made, by Germany to the effect that they expected to be consulted about Crete.

E. G.

⁽²⁾ [For Count von Aehrenthal's report of his conversations with Hakki Pasha on August 15-16, v. *O.-U.A.*, II, pp. 930-6, No. 2230.]

⁽³⁾ [*cf. infra*, pp. 211-2, No. 188.]

Germany has from the moment of retiring from Crete, always disclaimed any desire of intervening in any way.

Keep Count Goluchowsky's statement ready. Sir F. Cartwright might be referred to it.
L. M.

No. 180.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/980.

32994/32988/10/38.

(No. 371.)

St. Petersburg, D. September 6, 1910.

Sir,

R. September 12, 1910.

With reference to my despatch No. 367 of the 4th instant,⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a full summary of a leading article published to-day by the semi-official "Rossia" on the subject of the development of the Turkish navy.⁽²⁾ The "Rossia" declares that the "balance of naval power" between Russia and Turkey has been destroyed and must be re-established by an increase of the Russian Black Sea squadron. It announces that the Government will present proposals to the Duma for the re-armament of the Black Sea battleships, and for the re-equipment of the Nicolaieff and Sebastopol dockyards with a view to the construction of new ships. They will also frame definite proposals for the increase of the Black Sea fleet by a new division of modern battle-ships.

You will notice that the "Rossia" article mentions in passing that the Turkish fleet will be "trained by experienced instructors, invited for this purpose from England."

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

MINUTES.

This presents a new and very important consideration, namely the effect on Russian opinion of the regeneration of the Turkish fleet with the active co-operation of Great Britain.⁽³⁾ There is this to be said that if we do not lend our assistance, the Germans are eager to do so and it will be to their interest to push things through more rapidly than we should, owing to their obligation to assist the German yards in obtaining orders. It is a very delicate matter, but if an opportunity arose, it might be worth while to discuss the question with the Russian Government. The point being that Turkey means to have a fleet whether we assist or not, and that it is at least immaterial whether she be assisted by Great Britain or Germany and possibly advantageous that the Power should be Great Britain and that the Turkish fleet should not become Germanized like the Turkish army.

In this connection perhaps you will enquire privately what is Sir G. Lowther's opinion of the position of Admiral Williams.

L. M.

It would be best to mention it in conversation with Count Benckendorff when he returns.

Meanwhile Sir G. Lowther should have a copy of the despatch and enclosure and be asked for any observations which he thinks might be made upon it with reference to the position of Admiral Williams.⁽⁴⁾

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 203, No. 178.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. infra*, p. 210, No. 182.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*cp. infra*, p. 212, No. 184. Rear-Admiral Williams was appointed as Naval Adviser to the Ottoman Government on the retirement of Vice-Admiral Sir Douglas Gamble in May, 1910. *cp. infra*, p. 282, *Ed. note*.]

Sir G. Louther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1014.

33044/33044/10/44.

(No. 635.) Confidential.

Sir,

Therapia, D. September 6, 1910.

R. September 12, 1910.

I have the honour to forward herewith copy of a despatch from Mr. Geary Vice-Consul at Monastir giving what purports to be substance of a speech recently delivered by Talaat Bey the Minister of the Interior at a secret meeting of the Committee of Union and Progress at Salonica and stating that Djavid Bey's speech at a similar secret gathering of the Committee at Monastir was reported to have followed the same train of thought.

From the Committee of Union and Progress' internal point of view, Salonica is still the real capital, Monastir coming second and Constantinople third in importance. Judging the Committee by its acts and from what it has been possible to glean here during recent months, Talaat Bey's alleged statements would seem to tally with the general conception of the trend of the Committee's inside policy. Talaat Bey and Djavid Bey are the real Committee delegates in the Cabinet and, as shown at the debate in the Chamber on the Lynch fusion scheme the Committee were determined to sacrifice everything and everybody to the maintenance in power of its two delegates. It has since been felt that were the Chamber to show a decided determination to overthrow them the Committee has made every arrangement to dissolve the Chamber at a moment's notice with the aid of the military. It would thus seem that as long as the Committee hold the army there is no likelihood of a "Constitutional" change of Cabinet involving the disappearance of Talaat Bey and Djavid Bey. When the former states "We have a majority in the House of Representatives and all attempts to oppose us in the House have miserably failed" it is interesting to remember that Talaat Bey is the Grand Master of the Ottoman Grand Orient and that Djavid Bey is the master of the "Constitutional Lodge" while the Committee bloc contains a phalanx of some eighty to ninety Freemasons and the Ministers of Public Works, Public Instruction and the new Sheikh-ul-Islam, if not one or two other members of the Cabinet belong to the craft. The same feature is noticed among the influential officers of the Army and as the masonry of Young Turkey, unlike that of England, is political the strength of the Committee combination is obvious.

Its position being dependent on the support of the Army it has to retain its hold not only on the Staff officers but also on the Juniors and rank and file. There have recently been distinct rumours of disaffection and complaints among the officers of the line regiments as to all the important posts, civil as well as military, having been given to the Staff officers, many of whom have been appointed Valis, Mutessarifs &c. in the provinces with relatively high salaries.

Again some weeks ago it was stated on reliable authority that the Monastir Committee were very dissatisfied with the methods and many of the appointments of Talaat Bey and that the object of his and Djavid Bey's sudden visits to Salonica and Monastir was to quell this incipient insubordination. This would seem to be borne out by Mr. Geary's despatches.

That the Committee have given up any idea of Ottomanizing all the non-Turkish elements by sympathetic and Constitutional ways has long been manifest. To them "Ottoman" evidently means "Turk" and their present policy of "Ottomanization" is one of pounding the non-Turkish elements in a Turkish mortar. It was hoped that perhaps as they became more firmly seated in the saddle and effective opposition had disappeared under the pressure of the state of siege, the Committee would broaden rather than narrow their policy as regards internal administration but Talaat Bey's utterances seem to make the fulfilment of such hopes more remote.

As regards foreign policy Bulgaria with the possibility of Russian backing i.e. a Slav combination is the bugbear from the Salonica standpoint, just as the meeting at

Reval in 1908,⁽¹⁾ to their imaginations, meant the eventual realization of the San Stephano programme and since the acute phase of the Cretan question à propos of the admission of the Mussulman deputies to the Cretan Chamber, there have been indications of a decision of the Salonica Committee to bring about an understanding with Roumania, Austria and Germany based on a community of interests in the Balkans. A Balkan Confederation under Russian or Turkish ægis would be equally distasteful to the Austro-German combination and the Young Turks would seem to have given up any immediate intention of heading such a confederation in return for Austria undertaking to defeat any such project under Russian patronage. The Committee would seem to have similarly tried to establish an understanding with Roumania with the object of further isolating Bulgaria.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure in No. 181.

Mr Geary to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 38.) Confidential.

Sir,

Monastir, August 28, 1910.

I have the honour to report to Your Excellency that I have obtained from a confidential source the substance of the speech recently made at Salonica by Talaat Bey to the members of the local Committee of Union and Progress, assembled in secret conclave and am now informed that Djavid Bey's speech made in similar circumstances at Monastir substantially followed the same train of thought. I cannot, of course, give the "ipsissima verba" but I have every reason to believe that the information is derived from an unimpeachable source and that the following paragraphs afford an accurate reproduction of the gist of Talaat's discourse.

"It is essential" said Talaat, "that the Committee display to the world a solid and resolute front, for this alone can preserve our prestige in Europe and the maintenance of our power in our own country. At the present moment the reins of power are entirely in our hands and no one here present need fear that we are in any danger of losing control. The Cabinet is essentially in the hands of the Committee and will continue to be controlled by us. We have a majority in the House of Representatives and all attempts to oppose us in the House have miserably failed. Should we ever observe the smallest possibility of a vote of no confidence there we are prepared to secure an immediate dissolution. The army is solidly ranged in our support and any talk of danger on the part of our friends entirely lacks foundation. We remain all-powerful, and the continuance of our regime is assured. In some cases Djavid Bey, myself and the other members may fail to obtain the complete success, to which we aspire, but none of you need fear, that we shall fail to fulfil our duty or to retain our control of the whole administration.

"You are aware that by the terms of the Constitution equality of Mussulman and Ghiaur was affirmed but you one and all know and feel that this is an unrealizable ideal. The Sheriat, our whole past history and the sentiments of hundreds of thousands of Mussulmans and even the sentiments of the Ghiaurs themselves, who stubbornly resist every attempt to ottomanize them, present an impenetrable barrier to the establishment of real equality. We have made unsuccessful attempts to convert the Ghiaur into a loyal Osmanli and all such efforts must inevitably fail, as long as the small independent States in the Balkan Peninsula remain in a position to propagate ideas of Separatism among the inhabitants of Macedonia. There can therefore be no question of equality, until we have succeeded in our task of ottomanizing the Empire—a long and laborious task, in which I venture to predict that we shall at length

⁽¹⁾ [For the King's visit to Reval, v. *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, pp. 236-46, Nos. 194-5, and *Ed. note.*]

succeed after we have at last put an end to the agitation and propaganda of the Balkan States. Apropos of this question I am anxious to reassure our friends, who apprehend the possibility of a confederation of these States against us. No such danger exists. The Austrian Government has promised us to nip in the bud the nascency of any such alliance and Austria possesses the power to fulfil her promise. In return, we have promised Austria on our side never to become members of a similar Confederation. In reality no danger to us can spring from our neighbours in the Balkan Peninsula. We have no fear of Greece and I may take this opportunity of observing that I have every reason to believe, that the Cretan question will shortly be settled in a manner, that will satisfy our lawful claims. Serbia is bound to us by economic ties and Austria has served us well, by limiting the exportation from Serbia into Austria in such a manner, that Serbia remains economically dependent on us and cannot afford to join any alliance against the Turkish Empire.

"Montenegro is content to retain her position of independent isolation and would not venture to originate a hazardous foreign policy. Bulgaria alone remains. To her we must show a firm and indomitable front, making from time to time unimportant concessions, which will not in any way limit our freedom of action in Macedonia. Even in this direction our régime is in no danger.

"In Europe we enjoyed universal esteem, as was proved during the Cretan crisis and throughout our recent negotiations with Bulgaria. We enjoy the sympathy of Europe, the loss of which we have no intention of endangering by the formation of any alliance. At the same time we need material as well as moral support and we are, consequently, driven to develop the intimacy of our relations with the Triple Alliance—and more especially with Austria and Germany, who have recently given us solid proofs of their power and Sympathy. Thus on every side the prospect is favourable and all the efforts of our enemies will be met and vanquished.

"In the present Cabinet the true Young Turks preponderate, thanks largely to the tact and correctness of Hakki, who has always loyally supported us and to Senator Said, ever our trusted friend and advisor [*sic*]. Said has been invaluable to us, owing to his mental ability and his intimate relations with influential foreigners. He has sometimes displayed a greater tendency to indecision, than we should have wished, but we have possessed sufficient power even to turn his indecision to account. The Committee at Constantinople are an absolutely unanimous body but our organization in the Provinces is sadly inadequate—I might say that it scarcely exists—and this fact is, perhaps a real source of danger. The majority of the officials are on our side, as I have proved with my own eyes, and they are prepared to safeguard our interests, but side by side it is essential that branches of our central organization should exist. Permanent paid civil servants may fail to observe that ceaseless watchfulness, which is essential, and may grow careless, while others show signs of vacillation. It is therefore necessary that we should control their administration and we should not forget that we have other duties, of which these permanent officials ought to remain in ignorance. In the absence of branches of our central organization, the population begin to suspect us of weakness and lose confidence in our power, so that some of our best friends believe that our enemies will take advantage of the inadequacy of our organization. The object of my visit to you was to reassure you on the part of our body at Constantinople as to the security of our regime and to urge you to assist us by strengthening and solidifying the local organisation of the Committee of Union and Progress."

I have, &c.

ARTHUR B. GEARY.

MINUTES.

This is one of the most interesting and least encouraging despatches which we have recently received. See specially the passage marked with blue pencil.⁽²⁾

(2) [The last paragraph in Sir G. Lowther's letter, beginning "As regards foreign policy"]

There is probably some understanding with Roumania, with the sanction of Austria. The situation is so intricate and involved that I think things cannot long remain as they are, and that another revolution of some kind is inevitable, before long.

In the meantime, we may best play a waiting game so far as that is consistent with immediate interests.

L. M.

We must restrict ourselves to protecting our own interests when necessary and await developments as Mr. Mallet proposes.

E. G.

No. 182.

Mr Findlay to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 871/1014.

33879/33879/10/44A.

(No. 118.) Secret.

Sir,

Sofia, D. September 14, 1910.

R. September 19, 1910.

I have the honour to report that in the course of a conversation which I had yesterday with Assim Bey, the Turkish Minister in Sofia, the latter suddenly said that he would like to read to me an interesting despatch, copy of which had just been sent to him. I understood that the despatch was from the Turkish Minister at the Hague, but I am not quite sure of this.

The writer began by urging the definite solution of the Cretan question. In his opinion, however, the most vital questions with which Turkey had to deal were—

1. The Bulgarian question (Macedonia?).
2. The question of the Straits.

With regard to the latter, he continued, Russia would inevitably get uneasy if Turkey increased her Naval armaments, and might be tempted to raise the question of the free passage for Russian Men-of-war of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. In the writer's opinion Turkey would sink into a state of vassalage if she accorded this right to Russia alone. He preferred that the Straits should remain closed to the Ships of war of all foreign nations, as at present, but the only alternative compatible with the independence of Turkey was that they should be open to the Ships of war of all nations.

In commenting on this despatch, Assim Bey said that in a competition between Russia and Turkey in naval construction, Russia must win, being the richer country. Turkey, however, had a considerable advantage in being able to introduce ships into the Black Sea. He understood that his Government were ordering Dreadnoughts in England, and he thought that these vessels, which would probably be superior to anything which Russia could build in the Black Sea, would guarantee the Bosphorus against naval attack on the part of Russia.⁽²⁾

A copy of this despatch will be sent to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople by next messenger.

I have, &c.

M. DE C. FINDLAY.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Admiralty on October 6.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 201-2, No. 177.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Cartwright,

Foreign Office, September 14, 1910.

The Rosebery Mission seems to have been a great success, and I hope that nothing will occur to chill the genial influence which it has had upon the relations between ourselves and Austria-Hungary.⁽²⁾

I believe that d'Ae[h]renthal wishes to have peace and the maintenance of the "status quo" in the Near East. I understand his desire to keep officially outside Cretan difficulties. It is an attitude which is at any rate intelligible, especially to those who are unfortunately inside these difficulties. But I assume that d'Ae[h]renthal will not make use of the freedom of his position to turn these difficulties to the disadvantage at Constantinople of any of the four Powers, and that while officially aloof he will do what he can unofficially and independently to make the Turks moderate and reasonable.

On my side, d'Ae[h]renthal may rely upon my not making any mischief in the Near East. He ought, however, to understand clearly what my position is. The British Minister for Foreign Affairs has great responsibilities, and is troubled by many things in all parts of the world. In the Near East, I will not shirk any of the obligations which I have inherited, and I will fulfil to the utmost the undertaking which I share with the other three Powers to hold Crete in trust for the Porte. If the Cretans do not observe proper conditions, I shall be prepared to advocate, and to join with the other three Powers in carrying out, a military reoccupation of the Island, in order to fulfil our obligations to Turkey. But as long as we fulfil these obligations in Crete I will have no responsibility, except as one of the six Powers, for any thing the Turks may do outside Crete. If they attack Greece, I shall sit still, unless the six Powers are prepared to move. I have no desire to see peace disturbed in the Near East, but there are others, of whom Austria-Hungary is one, who are more directly interested in the maintenance of peace than Great Britain, and though I am willing to co-operate in any joint efforts to maintain peace I shall not incur the burden, diplomatic or otherwise, of doing what is necessary to maintain it unless those Powers who are more directly interested in its maintenance than Great Britain are prepared at least to do their share.

I tell you this for your guidance in conversation with d'Ae[h]renthal. He seems to me to take a hard but intelligible and sensible line, and to have been frank with you recently. I am quite willing that you should be frank with him as to my views. If trouble occurs in the Near East and if I advocate strongly that the four Powers should confine their action to Crete and take no responsibility for any thing which happens outside Crete, it is possible that we may be accused of having fomented trouble in order to embarrass Austria-Hungary. I should therefore like d'Ae[h]renthal to understand in advance what my views are, and to realise that I hold these views solely because, having regard to the enormous burden of responsibility which the British Government have to bear in all parts of the world, it is reasonable and natural that we should not wish to take more than our fair share of responsibility in the Near East.

Some of the reports which reach me go to show that Turkey desires to pick a quarrel with Greece. If the four Powers prevent in Crete any thing which is a real infringement of the "status quo," it will not be our fault if there is trouble between Turkey and Greece. D'Ae[h]renthal ought to be prepared for that to happen, however correct the attitude of the four Powers may be with regard to Crete; and he ought also to be prepared to realise that if the fire does break out it will need the action of

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 2.]

⁽²⁾ [Lord Rosebery had been sent to announce to the Emperor the accession of King George V.]

all six Powers to quench it. It may be that the Turks will themselves desire to prevent the fire from spreading and be able to localize it. If so, no great harm may result. But d'Ae[h]renthal is probably better able than I am to judge what the chances may be.

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

No. 184.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 371/908.

32994/32988/10/38.

(No. 283.) Confidential.

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 20, 1910.

I tr[ansmit] to Y[our] E[xcellency] herewith copies of three despatches from H[is] M[ajesty's] Chargé d'Affaires at St. Petersburg⁽¹⁾ relative to the uneasiness aroused in Russia, both in official circles and in the country at large, by the contemplated increase of the Turkish fleet.

Y[our] E[xcellency] will observe that, in connexion with this subject, the question arises of the unfavourable impression likely to be created in Russia by the loan of British naval officers to direct the reorganisation of that fleet.

It may be remarked on this point that the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t are determined in any case to regenerate and strengthen their navy and that, if H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] are unwilling to supply officers to assist them in the work of reorganisation, these can readily be obtained from another Power, for example from Germany, who would be only too ready to supply them, with the result that German influence would quickly become as supreme in the Turkish fleet as it already is in the army.

It may therefore well be argued that, from the point of view of Russia, it is preferable that things should remain as they are.

I shall take an opportunity of discussing this question with the Russian Ambassador on his return to this country from leave of absence and in the meanwhile shall be glad to receive any observations which Y[our] E[xcellency] may have to offer on these papers with reference to the position of Rear-Admiral Williams.⁽²⁾

[I am, &c.

E. GREY.]

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 201-3, Nos. 177-8; p. 206, No. 180.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 206, No. 180, *min.*, and *note* (4).]

No. 185.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1014.

36608/33905/10/44A.

(No. 395.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. September 26, 1910.

R. October 10, 1910.

I have the honour to report to you the substance of a conversation which I had yesterday with the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs regarding the situation in the Balkan Peninsula.

Monsieur Sazonow said that he was quite convinced that nothing had been signed between Roumania and Turkey,⁽¹⁾ but he believed that there had been a verbal

⁽¹⁾ [The rumour that a secret military convention had been concluded between Rumania and Turkey was current in the press at this time. Its existence was denied by King Charles of Rumania to the British Military Attaché at Bucharest. v. enclosure in despatch from Mr. Robertson to Sir Edward Grey, No. 51 of September 26, 1910 (F.O. 371/1014 35665/33905/10/44A.)]

exchange of views with very much the same effect as if a written convention had been executed. I asked whether he thought that this understanding would have any effect in the direction of bringing Serbia and Bulgaria closer together. He replied that he thought, and hoped, that it would have such an effect. Without speaking of a Confederation of Balkan States, in the realisation of which he did not believe, he thought that Bulgaria and Serbia ought to come secretly to an understanding with each other. Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro could, he said, put as many as six hundred thousand men in the field (it is evident that Monsieur Sazonow meant to include Greece in this estimate) which would present a serious obstacle to the ambitious plans of Austria. He thought that it was Russia's task to endeavour to find a "formula" of agreement between Bulgaria and Serbia, and with that object in his mind he had had a conversation with the Bulgarian Minister. He had however found Monsieur Tzokow's attitude rather unsatisfactory. The latter, speaking of the impossibility of coming to terms with the Servians, had referred to Servian claims with regard to Uskub; upon which Monsieur Sazonow had pointed out that it was foolish to speak of such quarrels when matters of vital interest were at stake.

I asked Monsieur Sazonow whether he was satisfied that the King of the Bulgarians was not engaged in private negotiations with Austria-Hungary. He said that he had no indications to that effect. On the contrary, the King was just now not on good terms with the Austrian Court. It was true that His Majesty's ambition was to obtain the Golden Fleece, and if the Fleece was given to him his dispositions would no doubt undergo a change. But the influence of the King in Bulgaria, though it was very great with personalities, could not alter a national policy which commended itself to the Bulgarians.

I asked whether Serbia was not too desirous of improving her relations with Turkey to be willing to enter into a combination with Bulgaria such as he contemplated. His Excellency said no, that the difficulty did not come from the side of Serbia. The Servians found it difficult to deal with the stubborn character of the Bulgarians. But Bulgaria must realise that if Servian independence were lost, Bulgaria herself would be in a hopeless position.

I was struck during this conversation by the way in which Monsieur Sazonow ignored the pacific professions of the Austro-Hungarian Government, and by his apparent conviction that Austria-Hungary entertains plans of further aggrandisement in the Balkan peninsula. Possibly this extreme distrust is to some extent the result of the practical absence of diplomatic intercourse between Vienna and St. Petersburg. At any rate Monsieur Sazonow, holding the view which he does of Austrian policy, and also I imagine feeling serious apprehensions lest Turkey should come into the orbit of the two Central Powers, seems to regard the independence of Serbia as being exposed under present circumstances to an actual danger, to guard against which he has set before him the task of bringing about a Serbo-Bulgarian agreement. He spoke to me in somewhat unfavourable terms of Monsieur Tzokow, who had evidently received his suggestions without much sympathy; but I have no doubt that on General Paprikow's arrival in St. Petersburg Monsieur Sazonow's first care will be to open conversation with him regarding this project.⁽²⁾

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

⁽²⁾ [*v. Ed. note immediately succeeding*]

[*ED. NOTE.*—The interview between M. Sazonov and General Paprikov mentioned in the immediately preceding document and some others are referred to by Mr. O'Beirne in the *Annual Report on Russia for 1910*, pp. 14-5, enclosed in Sir G. Buchanan's despatch No. 66 of March 22, 1911, R. March 27 (F.O. 11045/11045/11/38). The report was drawn up by Mr. O'Beirne, and the conversations described were with him, as he was acting Chargé d'Affaires, in Sir A. Nicolson's

absence, from May to July and from August to December 1910, when Sir G. Buchanan was appointed Ambassador. The relevant extract is as follows —

A few days later, M. Sazonow informed me that he had some grounds for believing that Bulgaria was now in reality better disposed than heretofore towards the idea of an understanding with Servia, and when General Paprikov arrived in St. Petersburg as Bulgarian Minister he told M. Sazonow, in great confidence, that to bring about such an understanding with the aid of Russia was the real object of his mission.

In conversations which I have had with the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs respecting the Balkans, he has at times spoken as if he regarded the independence of Servia as being exposed in existing circumstances to actual danger from the side of Austria. He evidently had no tangible grounds for attributing to Count d'Aehrenthal immediately aggressive designs, and indeed I do not think he himself seriously believed that while the existing conditions of things in the Balkans continued, Austria had any desire or intention to disturb the *status quo*. In promoting a combination between Servia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro, he had an eye to certain contingencies, such as a breakdown of the existing Turkish régime or any other eventuality which might bring about a general conflict in the Balkans. The combination in question would then offer a substantial obstacle, from a military point of view, to an advance of Austria southwards. Moreover, such an union effected under Russian auspices would serve to promote the principle aim of Russia's policy in the Balkans, the predominance of Russian influence among the lesser Balkan States.]

No. 186.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/913.

36610/36610/10/19.

(No. 398.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. October 1, 1910.

R. October 10, 1910.

The Greek Chargé d'Affaires informs me that the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs has been speaking to him with much earnestness of the necessity that exists for Greece to reorganise her military forces without delay. Monsieur Sazonow said to him that things might remain *in statu quo* for one year, or for two years, but if Greece was not prepared for eventualities it would be the worse for her. Why, he asked, did she not at once call in foreign military instructors (of nationality other than German)?—and he repeated to Monsieur Psycha a remark which he had made to me, as reported in my despatch No. 395 of the 26th ultimo,⁽¹⁾ to the effect that Greece, Bulgaria, Servia and Montenegro could together put fully six hundred thousand men in the field. Speaking of the dangers to which Greece was exposed Monsieur Sazonow referred not merely to Turkish military preparations but to designs of aggrandisement which he said were entertained by Austria. He said to my Greek colleague “*Vous verrez l'Autriche à Salonique.*”

It is obvious that the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, in his desire to impress my colleague with a sense of the necessity of military reforms in Greece, thought fit to indulge in some exaggeration as to the gravity of the situation. You will however have observed from my despatch above referred to that His Excellency spoke to me in a generally similar sense. There is no doubt that the militant attitude of Turkey and the policy which the Russian Government attribute to Austria-Hungary have combined to cause them real uneasiness as to future developments in the Balkans.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

(1) [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/981.
36616/35586/10/38.
(No. 405.)

St. Petersburg, D. October 5, 1910.

Sir,

R. October 10, 1910.

In my immediately preceding despatch⁽¹⁾ I have had the honour to furnish you with a summary of the comments of the St. Petersburg press on the occasion of Monsieur Iswolsky's relinquishment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The expression which they give of Russian public opinion touching foreign affairs is of special interest at a moment when the management of Russia's foreign policy is passing into new hands. It may be well however to note that the utterances of the Russian press are perhaps somewhat misleading in one important respect. As you will have observed, the attacks on the main lines of Monsieur Iswolsky's policy, and more particularly on the policy of an *entente* with Great Britain, proceed almost exclusively from papers of little weight or standing like the "Sviet" or the "Zemschina," or else from the pen of irresponsible writers like Monsieur Mentchikoff. The more serious newspapers on the other hand, while they criticise the outgoing Minister's conduct of affairs in points of detail, express a general approval of the principles of his policy. One might thus be tempted to conclude that in regard to these principles there was something approaching a unanimity of serious Russian opinion; whereas it must be recognised that in fact there is an influential section of opinion in this country which fundamentally disapproves of the policy identified with Monsieur Iswolsky's tenure of office.

The substance of the reproach directed against Monsieur Iswolsky by these critics is that he has placed Russia in a position of definite antagonism to the two central European Powers; and that result, they say, he has brought about mainly by the policy which he adopted towards Great Britain. For Germany during the Japanese war had observed an attitude which gave her some claims on Russian gratitude. Russia repaid her by supporting France at Algeciras, which was perhaps inevitable in view of Russia's position as an ally. But when Monsieur Iswolsky came to office his first step was to conclude an agreement with that European Power which stood most conspicuously opposed to Germany. The effect on German susceptibilities of the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907⁽²⁾ was enhanced by the fact that it followed closely on the arrangements between Spain, France and England with regard to the Mediterranean, and was itself succeeded shortly afterwards by the Reval meeting. Germany displayed uneasiness and resentment, and drew away from Russia; and the consequences of her change of attitude were seen when difficulties arose with Austria-Hungary. Had Monsieur Iswolsky, up to the time of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, maintained the good relations which formerly existed with Germany, the latter might have acted a mediatory part as at once the ally of Austria and the friend of Russia. She took up her position, instead, uncompromisingly by the side of the Dual Empire, and Russia met with a diplomatic defeat from which the support of the western Powers could not avail to save her.

Monsieur Iswolsky's subsequent efforts to recover some of the ground which he had lost met with but very partial success. The Turkish indemnity arrangement did not bring an accession of Russian influence at Constantinople. Turkey on the contrary seems to be leaning towards the Central Powers, and has embarked on a militant policy which causes Russia serious misgivings. The scheme of a Balkan confederation which should include Turkey has disappeared from the range of practical politics, and little progress has been made towards a defensive combination of the lesser Balkan

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced, as its substance is sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 371/981. 36615/35586/10/38.)]

⁽²⁾ [v. *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. IV, pp. 618-20, *App. I.*]

States. Nor can it be said that Russia has as yet gained compensating advantages of a tangible kind in Persia through her Agreement with Great Britain. She sees her various demands treated with stubborn disregard by the Persian Government, and her association with Great Britain hampers her in those steps which she might otherwise be disposed to take in order to assert her proper position in north Persia.

I have here endeavoured to resume very briefly the views which I believe to be held by many thinking Russians as to the consequences to Russia of the policy adopted by Monsieur Iswolsky, of which the agreement with England is regarded as forming the pivot. It may of course be replied that the English agreement is not responsible for the conflict with Austria-Hungary, which was the necessary outcome of Count Aehrenthal's designs in the Balkans. But there is force in the contention that that agreement contributed largely to the attitude taken up by Germany in the conflict, and so brought Russia face to face in Eastern Europe with the antagonism of both the Central Powers. The weakness of her position and its unpleasant consequences were so clearly felt in the crisis of 1908-9 that it not surprising to find a strong party in this country which holds that the main object of Russian diplomacy, to be pursued to the exclusion of other considerations, should be, while maintaining the French alliance, to restore cordial relations with Germany. As you are aware, this opinion is largely held in Court circles, notwithstanding the Emperor's firm adherence to the English *entente*; and it also prevails widely in military and in the higher official circles.

For a general approval of the policy of close co-operation with the Western Powers it is necessary to look among politicians other than those of the Right, among the lower ranks of officials, in the so-called "intelligenza," and, generally, in those circles which supply the strength of Liberalism in Russia. Here the dominant motives are, I think, a lively antipathy to Germany and the dread of German influence in Russian internal politics. The feeling is also strong that Russia has a mission as protectress of the Slav races, which she cannot worthily accomplish by coming to terms with the Central Powers and acquiescing in Germanic hegemony in Eastern Europe.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

No. 188.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 971/1011.

97528/26721/10/44.

(No. 709.)

Sir,

Constantinople, D. October 6, 1910.

R. October 17, 1910.

My German colleague came to see me yesterday and while on the one hand he carefully avoided speaking on the subject of the alleged Turco-Roumanian Convention, he, on the other hand, repudiated all idea of Turkey joining the Triple Alliance in any form whatsoever. Even were it, he said to the advantage of Turkey to do so which was open to question it would, he said, be little short of madness for Germany, considering the very large number of questions both external and internal which Turkey still had to solve, to fetter herself with such responsibilities. He very severely criticised the correspondent here of the "Neue Freie Presse" who by his fantastic communications was always trying to make trouble. It was regrettable that a paper of such standing should employ a correspondent who was bereft of all sense.

There is little doubt in my mind that Baron von Marschall's visit had for its distinct object this denial of any definite attachment on the part of Turkey to the Triple Alliance. How much truth there is in his declarations or what his reasons were for making them at this moment I am unable to say.

He went on to speak about the contemplated Loan and declared that the attitude of France to his mind was unintelligible. On the one hand they urged economy on Turkey; on the other they demanded that if Germany supplied this country with necessary military stores, which His Excellency said, must be purchased in Germany, France should be given orders of a corresponding value. He was at a loss to understand how this could be reconciled with true economy. Moreover he considered that the declarations of the French Government to the effect that by her recent expenditure Turkey was courting ruin were absolutely untrue. All that Turkey had done was to transform the army which was in a chaotic condition when the new régime was initiated into some condition of real order. The process was at first a costly one but the heavy expenditure was only temporary and the condition of the army once regularized the expenditure would become normal and moderate. Further the debt of this country was small for the size of the population and for its resources and it was being paid off.

It is not without interest to note how the tone of both Baron Marschall and his Austrian colleague, as regards the present state of affairs here has, during their absence from this country during the summer months changed from one of extreme pessimism to one of comparative optimism.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

MINUTE.

It may be quite true that Turkey would be, at present, an embarrassing partner, if a regular member of the Triple Alliance but there can be no doubt that Germany is making every endeavour to draw Turkey within the orbit of the Central Powers and that, in the event of European complications, in which England was involved as one of the principals, we should probably have to reckon with Turkey.

L. M.
A. N.
E. G.

No. 189.

Sir R. Paget to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1014.
37579/33905/10/44A.

(No. 70.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. October 6, 1910.

R. October 17, 1910.

With reference to Mr. Barclay's Despatch No. 64, Confidential, of the 20th Ultimo,⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to report that some three days ago I had an opportunity of a conversation with the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs, the first upon political questions since my recent arrival in Belgrade.

The lately reported Turco-Roumanian Convention was not unnaturally one of the first subjects mentioned. Monsieur Milovanovitch said that whilst unable to vouch for the actual existence of such a Convention as a written document he had felt persuaded for many months past that Turkey and Roumania had an understanding in regard to Bulgaria. He pointed out that although the understanding had in all probability been encouraged by Austria, Roumania had of herself sufficient motive to desire to place a check upon Bulgaria inasmuch as a too unrestrained Bulgaria always presented the possibility of trouble to Roumania in connection with the Dobrutza.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. This despatch, No. 64 of September 20 (F.O. 371/1014. 35653/33905/10/44A), referred to the rumour of a Turco-Rumanian military agreement, and the possibility of other developments in Balkan diplomacy. *cp. supra*, p. 212, No. 185, note ⁽¹⁾.]

I enquired whether the rumour concerning this Convention had produced any effect upon the Serbo-Bulgarian relations. His Excellency replied that it was still too early for any change to be noticeable but that undoubtedly Bulgaria would be somewhat sobered and this was the first requirement for a better understanding with Servia. Bulgaria said Monsieur Milovanovitch had lost her head over her success in throwing off her dependence on Turkey and conceit had led her to imagine that she could become the only dominant power in the Balkans. This idea she must now modify.

As to the other aspects of the supposed Convention Monsieur Milovanovitch thought a danger lay in its possible effect upon Turkey—a danger depending principally upon the intentions of Austria. If these were really honest and straightforward there should be no cause for apprehension but if the contrary, Turkey, being secure from pressure on the part of Bulgaria, would be encouraged to make the situation impossible as regards Greece and Macedonia. The news from Macedonia His Excellency said was distinctly bad; excesses against the Christians were increasing. These excesses were probably in great part due to a desire on the part of the Young Turks to recover caste in the eyes of the Mahomedan world which they had lost through their too progressive attitude on first coming into power, consequently there appeared but little prospect of the excess abating. At the conclusion of our conversation Monsieur Milovanovitch repeated the remark he had made to Mr. Barclay namely that he had grave fears for next spring.

Referring to Monsieur Milovanovitch's remarks upon Serbo-Bulgarian relations and to Mr. Lindley's telegram No. 48 of the 2nd October,⁽²⁾ which was repeated to me, I have the honour to report that Monsieur Tosheff my Bulgarian Colleague in the course of a recent conversation with me made a statement similar to the one made by the Russian Chargé d'Affaires in Sofia and reported by Mr. Lindley to the effect that the natural and only reply to the Turco-Roumanian Convention would be an alliance between Bulgaria, Servia, Greece and Montenegro. But such an alliance added Monsieur Tosheff in order to be really useful and effective would have to possess the avowed sympathy of the Triple Entente. These are also the views of the Russian Minister here Monsieur Hartwig who told me this morning that he intended to work with this object in view.

Copy sent to Sofia.

I have, &c.

RALPH PAGET.

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 371/1014. 35564/38905/10/44A.)]

No. 190.

Mr. Findlay to Sir Eduard Grey.

F.O. 371/834.

37624/37624/10/7.

(No. 180.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sofia, D. October 12, 1910.

R. October 17, 1910.

With reference to my despatch No. 128 of to-day's date,⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to transmit herewith a despatch from Lieutenant-Colonel Napier, military attaché to His Majesty's Legation, giving the opinion of the Chief of the Bulgarian General Staff as to the rôle which might be played by the Bulgarian army in a war in which the Central Powers and Turkey should find themselves engaged on the same side.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It enclosed Lieutenant-Colonel Napier's first report of his conversation with General Fitcheff (F.O. 371/834. 37622/37622/10/7.)]

A copy of this despatch and of its enclosure will be forwarded to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople by next messenger.

I have, &c.

M. DE C. FINDLAY.

Enclosure in No. 190.

Lieutenant-Colonel Napier to Mr. Findlay ⁽²⁾

(No. 22.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sofia, October 11, 1910.

In continuation of my despatch of yesterday's date, I have the honour to report that during the same interview General Fitcheff let fall some further remarks to the following effect :—

General Fitcheff, presuming that Turkey has joined the Triple Alliance, said that Bulgaria could reckon on assistance from outside to keep Roumania back, and that Bulgaria's rôle would be to hold the Turkish army fast here in the Balkans, and thus prevent her from helping Germany and Austria. I told General Fitcheff that if Germany's object in winning over Turkey were merely to ensure the safety of the southern frontiers of the Central European Powers that object would be achieved even if Turkey were held in check, and that I hoped for their own sake that they would not let the Turks come so far as the Balkans, but General Fitcheff disagreed with this, and declared that Turkey would be able to actually place a body of troops at the disposal of Germany and Austria in the field were they not held fast here by the Bulgarians.

I did not attribute any particular importance to his words at the time, thinking that he was merely suiting his conversation to his audience, but, in view of your conversation with me this morning, I have now thought them worth reporting, as General Fitcheff, in thus laying stress on the value of Bulgaria to the Triple *Entente*, may have given an additional indication of the present trend of Bulgarian politics towards some kind of definite understanding with the Powers of the Triple *Entente*.

I have, &c.

H. D. NAPIER. *Lieutenant-Colonel,*
Military Attaché.

(2) [The text given above is printed from the copy in the *Confidential Print*, as the original was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 191.

Mr. Findlay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1011.

37625/26721/10/44A.

(No. 181.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sofia, D. October 12, 1910.

R. October 17, 1910.

I have the honour to report that, in a conversation which I had with Assim Bay [*sic*] yesterday morning, I alluded to the reports which have recently appeared in the European Press representing Turkey as having, by her understanding with Roumania, definitely entered the orbit of the Triple Alliance.

Assim Bey replied sententiously that diplomatists should not pay attention to press reports. The Turkish Government naturally wish to be on good terms with the

Powers of the Triple Alliance, but that by no means meant that they intended to bind themselves to that group, and by so doing lose the friendship of the Powers of the Triple Entente.

All the trouble which Turkey had lately experienced in connection with the French loan was due to the pressure of Russia, and to the irritation of Russia at the purchase by Turkey of German ships of war. Turkey was well aware that Russia was her natural enemy, and for that reason her interests might appear superficially to lie with the Triple Alliance. But Turkey was also well aware that Germany would only use her as an instrument against other Powers. Turkey was too well aware of the internal disorganisation of Russia to be afraid of her, and she wished to retain the friendship of France because it was useful to her, and of England because England was in a position to do her untold harm, though Turkey was also in a position to injure England.

I observed that I was glad that Assim Bey realised the importance to Turkey of retaining the friendship of Great Britain. I thought that he need only consider the benefits Turkey had derived from British support during the last two years, in order to estimate the disastrous effects which would result if she compelled us to withdraw it by any imprudent action.

Assim Bey subsequently called on Monsieur Paléologue and spoke on the same subject, but with this difference, that he alluded to Russia as the hereditary enemy of Turkey, and to Great Britain as being also a natural enemy owing to our presence in Cyprus and Egypt. I venture to call your particular attention to this remark, which doubtless slipped out unawares, but which strikes me as significant.

I may observe in this connection that when Hakki Pasha recently passed through Bulgaria on his return to Constantinople, Assim Bey went to the frontier to meet His Highness and, on reaching Sophia, called immediately on Monsieur Paléologue. The latter informs me that Assim Bey was much excited, and said he had come, not to make "phrases" but to say that, "unless France assists Turkey to procure money, she is lost." Monsieur Paléologue asked why in that case Djavid Bey had behaved in such an arrogant and almost insolent manner when he was at Paris. Assim Bey replied that if the attitude of Djavid Bey had been as described, he had behaved with unpardonable levity, adding "if we could only get rid of him." "In any case" he repeated "if France withdraws her friendship and financial support, Turkey is lost." Hakki Pasha was much depressed and the outlook was very black. He begged Monsieur Paléologue to report what he had said to the French Government, and I understand that Monsieur Paléologue did so.

I have frequently pointed out that Assim Bey is subject to extremes of optimism and pessimism. It would appear possible, however, that the difficulties which Turkey has experienced in obtaining the money she requires has convinced some of her statesmen, at least, that she cannot afford to dispense with the support of France and her friends.

I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople by next messenger.

I have, &c.

M. DE C. FINDLAY.

MINUTE.

It would be interesting to know how England could do Turkey "untold harm." See fifth paragraph.

A P.

Oct[ober] 25, 1910.

R. P. M.

A. N.

E. G.

No. 192.

Mr. Findlay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/834.

37626/37626/10/7.

(No. 132.) Secret.

Sir,

Sofia, D. October 12, 1910.

R. October 17, 1910.

As I had the honour to report by telegraph, Mr. Malinoff, The President of the Bulgarian Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs, appealed to Monsieur Paléologue, the French Minister here, on the 8th instant for the sympathy and support of the Powers of the Triple Entente. The exact words used, which Mr. Malinoff afterwards confirmed in writing were as follows :

“Les Puissances de la Triple Entente sont désormais aussi intéressées que nous dans notre cause. Le moment n'est-il donc pas venu pour elles de nous témoigner leur sympathie et de nous promettre leur appui?” Mr. Malinoff requested Monsieur Paléologue to transmit this request to his Government and to urge them to give it their favourable consideration. Mr. Liaptcheff subsequently spoke to Monsieur Paléologue on the same subject. Mr. Malinoff said nothing whatever of this nature to me; I do not know whether he made a similar request to Prince Ouroussoff, the Russian Chargé d’Affaires; but, if so, the latter has not mentioned it, though we have discussed our respective interviews with Mr. Malinoff. It appears to me, however, not improbable that Prince Ouroussoff may have suggested to Mr. Malinoff that he should sound the French Government, as, in the course of a visit which Prince Ouroussoff paid me on the 7th instant, he discussed his suggestion, as reported by Mr. Lindley, that the Triple Entente should take the opportunity to induce Bulgaria to bind herself definitely to their group of Powers and to encourage an Alliance between Bulgaria and the other Balkan States.

I may say that Prince Ouroussoff is very young, and that he has had little experience and none at all in the East. Mr. Sementowsky-Kourilo, the Russian Minister, has unfortunately had to go to Lausanne to be operated on for appendicitis. I have always worked with him on the most intimate and confidential terms, and I understand that before leaving he instructed Prince Ouroussoff to consult me.

In discussing Prince Ouroussoff’s proposal, I pointed out that, as far as my information went, the situation was not sufficiently clear to justify our respective Governments in promising Bulgaria the active support which would be required to induce her to tie her hands. I much doubted whether King Ferdinand could be induced to do so, or whether he could be trusted to keep engagements when taken. The Bulgarian Government did not appear to know their own minds, and, on the King’s return, their policy might be changed. My instructions on coming to Sophia had been to encourage a rapprochement not only between Bulgaria and Turkey, but also with the other Balkan States. I had lost no favourable opportunity of doing so, but the mutual distrust and jealousy existing between these states had rendered futile any attempt at a rapprochement. It was possible that Turkish pressure might bring them together, and I would be glad to advise the Bulgarian Ministers to take every opportunity of improving their relations with their neighbours. But I feared that this would not be accomplished in a day, unless indeed Turkey actually attempted to crush one or other of them. Further I pointed out that, if Austria or Turkey got wind of an Alliance between Bulgaria and Serbia, they might take very drastic steps to prevent it. In that case would our respective Governments be prepared to come to their support? To this question Prince Ouroussoff replied somewhat reluctantly in the negative. In that case, I urged, our respective Governments would be well advised to act with the greatest caution. As regards the reported Turco-Roumanian Convention—granting that some understanding existed—

I could not believe that it was of an offensive nature. I thought it more likely that Count Aehrenthal had engineered the arrangement in order either to stop the outbreak of a war between Turkey and Bulgaria or to localise it, if it could not be stopped. Incidentally Count Aehrenthal had probably desired to demonstrate to Turkey the power of the Triple Alliance and to increase its prestige at Constantinople. It could not be in the interest of Roumania to join Turkey in crushing Bulgaria. Consequently Bulgaria need not fear an attack on the part of Turkey if she remained quiet.

On the other hand, if it became clear that Turkey had joined the Triple Alliance I quite recognised the expediency of maintaining Bulgaria as a check upon her. I ventured to think, however, that Turkey could not afford to lose the support, financial and other, of the Triple Entente, and I had heard on good authority, on passing through Vienna a few days ago, that no money for a Turkish loan could at present be found either in Vienna or Berlin. This was evidently true, as the negotiations at Paris had apparently been resumed. While admitting the force of my arguments in favour of patience and caution, Prince Ouroussoff did not appear to be quite convinced and, on the afternoon of the same day, he told Monsieur Paléologue that he thought our group of Powers did not bluff enough, and that King Ferdinand should be forced to bind himself by Treaty to our side. Monsieur Paléologue pointed out the difficulty and danger of binding King Ferdinand, and expressed his doubts as to the value of the proposed Treaty. "But if we had the King's signature?" replied Prince Ouroussoff. I think few who know King Ferdinand would place much reliance on His Majesty's signature. Prince Ouroussoff, however, has not even seen the King, so cannot be expected to estimate the possibilities of His Majesty's extremely versatile character.

I would venture to submit that, for the present at least, there is nothing to be done except watch the situation closely and await developments. I am distinctly under the impression that Bulgarians of all parties feel the curb which has been applied to them by the Turco-Roumanian understanding and that they are growing restive under it. In various quarters the wish has been expressed that Turkey would attack Bulgaria, and I cannot help fearing that, if they were promised active support, in case of an attack upon them, they might manœuvre in order to be attacked.

Assim Bey has just shown to me two letters signed by T. Alexandroff and another Voivode on behalf of the Revolutionary Association of Adrianople and Macedonia, ordering the peasants in certain districts who possessed arms to join them and proceed to Bulgaria under pain of being put to death as traitors. These papers, which appeared authentic, would seem to show that the refugee movement was partly organised by agents who may, or may not, have been acting in complicity with the Bulgarian Government, but who were certainly in touch with Bulgarian politicians such as Mr. Ghennadieff. But Mr. Ghennadieff would appear to be on confidential terms with General Fitcheff, Chief of the Bulgarian Staff, and it is said that he has also had dealings with Mr. Liaptcheff. It therefore appears most probable that, if Bulgaria were promised the support of the Triple Entente in certain eventualities, similar manœuvres might be resorted to in order to produce the "*casus foederis*," and it would matter little to the supporters of Bulgaria, who would have to pay the piper, whether it was the Bulgarian Government or one of the Opposition Parties who had called the tune.

On the other hand, if Turkey definitely threw in her lot with the Triple Alliance, it would appear that we might confidently expect her to be used against us in Egypt, in case of a conflict. In that case it would undoubtedly be most useful to have Bulgaria to occupy the Turkish army nearer home. (Please see my despatch No. 131 Confidential of to-day⁽¹⁾ and Lieutenant-Colonel Napier's despatch forming enclosure in my despatch No. 130 of to-day.⁽²⁾)

(1) [v. immediately preceding document.]

(2) [v. *supra*, p. 219, No. 190, *encl.*]

Copies of this despatch will be sent to His Majesty's Ambassadors at Vienna and Constantinople by next messenger.

[I have, &c.]

M. DE C. FINDLAY.

P.S.—Since writing the above, I have seen Prince Ouroussoff who now appears to take a calmer view of the situation.

M. DE C. F.

No. 193.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/1014.

38564/38905/10/44A.

(No. 416.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. October 14, 1910.

Sir,

R. October 24, 1910.

In the course of a conversation which I had yesterday with the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs I said that the recent article in the Bulgarian semi-official paper "Preporetz" did not look well for the conclusion of an agreement such as he wished to see between Bulgaria and Servia. Your attention has doubtless already been called to the article in question, which maintains that the friendly relations existing between Roumania and Turkey furnish no ground for uneasiness on the part of Bulgaria, and no reason why the latter should resort to counter-measures. The attitude of Roumania towards Bulgaria, says the "Preporetz," has always been correct, whereas the Servians have in the past invariably shown themselves ready to join hands with Turkey against their Bulgarian neighbour in the hope of enriching themselves at the expense of the Bulgarian race.

Monsieur Sazonow replied that the inner meaning of the "Preporetz" article was, he thought, other than what at first sight appeared. He had some grounds for believing that Bulgaria was now in reality better disposed than heretofore towards the idea of an understanding with Servia, but owing to apprehensions respecting the attitude of Austria the Bulgarian Government wished to conceal their real intentions and the inspired article was written with that purpose.

I said, by way of inducing His Excellency to explain his views more fully, that it certainly seemed clear that Austria was seeking to prevent an understanding between Servia and Bulgaria. Monsieur Sazonow replied that in his opinion Austria's motive in so acting was the fear that Bulgaria, if she felt herself sufficiently strengthened by an understanding with the other minor Balkan States, might adopt an aggressive policy. He then made the curious statement that a somewhat similar view of the position was taken by the Russian General Staff. If Bulgaria could reckon on a combined force of six hundred thousand bayonets (here His Excellency was referring, of course, to a combination which should include Greece), the Russian military authorities considered that events in Macedonia might lead her to take the offensive without warning, at a time when it did not suit Russia that she should move. Russia's policy ought to be on the contrary to keep the movements of Bulgaria under her own effective control.

Monsieur Sazonow himself, while appearing to attach a certain amount of importance to this view of the matter, always expresses himself in the sense that the greater evil of the present situation is the weakness of the lesser Balkan States, standing as they do isolated one from another. The possibility of aggressive action on the part of Bulgaria he seems to regard as a lesser and more remote danger, and therefore his present policy is to promote a defensive combination commencing with Servia and Bulgaria and including Greece and Montenegro.

From the terms in which the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs speaks of the necessity of such a combination one would infer that he regards the independence of Servia as being exposed in existing circumstances to actual danger from the side of Austria. I need hardly say however that he has no tangible grounds for attributing to Count Aehrenthal any aggressive designs against Servia, and indeed, I do not think that he seriously believes that so long as the present condition of things in the Balkans continues Austria has any desire or intention to disturb the *status quo*. No doubt Monsieur Sazonow finds it useful to exaggerate the Austrian danger in order to promote the idea of union between the Slav States. In striving to bring about that union his main object, it may be presumed, is to make Russian influence predominant among the minor Balkan States. He also of course has in view the possibility of events occurring to precipitate a general conflict in the Balkan Peninsula, in which contingency he thinks it all-important that the smaller States should stand together, and so offer a serious obstacle to an Austrian advance.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

No. 194.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/981.
88570/88570/10/38.

(No. 423.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. October 20, 1910:

R. October 24, 1910.

It cannot be said that the very pronounced advances made to Russia by Count Aehrenthal in his speeches before the Austrian Foreign Committee of the Delegations have met with any response in this country so far as public opinion has found expression in the press. The publication of the Austrian Red Book and the discussion in the Delegations have served only to revive unpleasant recollections of the crisis in the relations between the two countries which arose through the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the majority of the Russian newspapers comment in a spirit of unabating resentment on the course taken on that occasion by Count Aehrenthal, and on the decisive support which he received from Germany.

It is however evident that a strong effort is about to be made on the side of Austria-Hungary to take advantage of Monsieur Iswolsky's departure from the Foreign Office in order to start a new chapter in Austro-Russian relations, and it seems not too much to assume that Count Aehrenthal will now seriously endeavour to induce Monsieur Sazonow to come to some kind of an understanding as to the policy of Russia and Austria respectively in the Balkans. At first sight it might appear that public opinion here is still too sore to permit of any idea of an understanding with the Dual Monarchy. But while this is true of a very wide section of Russian opinion, which is that chiefly voiced by the press, it must not be forgotten that decided views as to the necessity of good relations with the two Central Powers are largely held in Court and military circles here, and among what are called the governing classes. From these quarters a Russian Minister could certainly count on support, if he deemed it expedient to come to a working understanding with Austria regarding the Balkans.

Monsieur Sazonow himself seems to me to have inherited an ample share of Monsieur Iswolsky's dislike and mistrust towards Austria;⁽¹⁾ and if Count Aehrenthal is to come to terms with him he will have in the first place to dispel some of his present suspicions in regard to Austrian policy. Moreover Monsieur Sazonow,

⁽¹⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 226-7, No 196.]

though he has only been a few weeks in charge of Russia's foreign affairs, has already given me to understand that he has definitely adopted the policy of promoting a combination between Servia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro, which in the event of a breakdown of the existing Turkish régime or of any other eventuality bringing about a general conflict in the Balkans would offer a substantial obstacle from a military point of view to an advance of Austria southwards. Such a union, effected under Russian auspices, would also probably serve to make Russian influence predominant among the lesser Balkan States. In the pursuit of this aim Monsieur Sazonow appears to run directly counter to the policy of Austria; for that Power apparently opposes a union between the minor States, partly because she fears that it may tend to strengthen Russian influence, and partly also I presume because she does not wish to see the creation of any new factor of considerable strength with which she might have to reckon in certain contingencies. It is here, I think, that there lies a tangible difficulty to be overcome before Russia and the Dual Monarchy can arrive at any real understanding in regard to affairs in the Balkans.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

No. 195.

Mr. Findlay to Sir Edward Grey

F.O. 371/1000.

40020/926/10/44A.

(No. 135.) Secret.

Sir,

Sofia, D. October 24, 1910.

R. November 3, 1910.

I have the honour to report that on the 22nd inst[ant]: Mr. Gordon Browne, the Correspondent of the "Times" in Sofia, informed me that he had had a long conversation with Matoff, who, since the murder of Boris Saroff, has been one of the principal chiefs of the Macedonian "Internal Organisation."

Matoff stated that the present state of Macedonia was worse than it had ever been under the reign of Abdul Hamid; that the persecution of the Christian inhabitants, including murder, rape, torture, floggings and imprisonment, was being ruthlessly carried on either in the course of the disarmament or of the search for bands, and that the "Internal Organisation" had decided to start a terrorist campaign and to repay the Turks in their own coin.

The "Internal Organisation" had suspended its action in 1908 in hopes that the constitutional Régime would bring peace to Macedonia and that the Young Turks would keep their promise to treat the various races and religions on an equal footing.

In order to bring their organisation within the four corners of the law the Constitutional Clubs had been founded; but it soon became evident that no equality of treatment could be hoped for. In spite however of disappointments, the Bulgarian leaders decided at the time of the Coup d'état in April 1909 to again support the Young Turks and to hope for better times. A proposal was made immediately after the revolution that the Bulgarians should join the Committee of Union and Progress, but after consideration the Bulgarian leaders decided to decline to do so and to form the Constitutional Clubs. It soon became evident that the leaders of the Committee, so far from wishing to establish equal treatment for the various races and religions, were determined to "Ottomanise" all, i.e., to reduce all non-Turkish nationalities to abject subjection. Consequently the "Internal organisation," which had only been suspended, was resuscitated and it now included 75% of the Bulgarian population of Macedonia. The Constitutional Clubs were broken up, and the levelling policy, which had been drastically applied in Albania to the insurgents, was then extended to the peaceful Christian population of Macedonia; the "internal organisation" replied by

organising a number of small bands consisting of from 3 to 4 men, each of whom was intended to become himself a band leader when the time came for a general insurrection. There were now fifty of these bands organised, not in Bulgaria, but in Macedonia itself, and the organisation intended to attack the foreign railways and the members of the Committee with a view to avenging the persecution of the Christians, of attracting the attention of the Powers, and of preparing the ground for an insurrection on the first favourable opportunity. They had recently wrecked a goods train on the Oriental Company's line near KOUMANOVO. A goods train had been selected in order to effect their purpose with the smallest possible sacrifice of life.

Mr. Gordon Browne pointed out that the "attention" which would be attracted by terrorist methods would certainly be unfavourable to those who employed them, and that they could only cause increased misery in Macedonia. Matoff replied that they had carefully considered the pros and cons and had decided that, as Europe had remained deaf to the appeal of the Bulgarian government, and as the present state of things was simply intolerable, there was nothing else to be done.

I may observe that my information as regards Matoff up to the commencement of the disarmament in Macedonia was that he was opposed to terrorist methods, which were chiefly advocated by Tchernopëeff and his partisans. Matoff was certainly, up to quite recently, in touch with Messieurs Malinoff, Liaptcheff and Paprikoff, and it therefore appears probable that the Bulgarian Government are at any rate aware of his intentions.

I should also mention that Matoff has repeatedly declared that he would never again commence any action in Macedonia unless he had a definite promise from the Bulgarian Government that they would support an insurrection by a declaration of war against Turkey. On the other hand I cannot believe that the Ministers can have been so rash as to have given any such promise under present circumstances. Nor can I believe that either Matoff or any one else can regard the stability of the present Ministry as sufficient to render it likely that a promise given by them now would be kept five months hence.

It is obvious that in speaking so frankly to the "Times" Correspondent, Matoff was actuated by the desire to give publicity to his views. It is possible therefore that a certain amount of what he said may be mere bluff. The fact remains however that daily reports of Turkish excesses are published in Sofia, and that the Christian population in Macedonia, whether Bulgarian, Servian or Greek, seems to be undergoing continuous and systematic ill-treatment of a very serious nature. Some hundred refugees with their women and children are reported to have arrived at KUSTENDIL in a state of the greatest destitution, and, although the practical sympathy extended to these unfortunate people both by the Bulgarians and by the Macedonian residents in Bulgaria is of the slightest, it is to be anticipated that when the Sobranje meets on the 28th inst[ant] there will be an outburst of more or less genuine indignation.

I have, &c.

M. DE C. FINDLAY.

No. 196.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey

F.O. 371/981.
40352/38570/10/88.
(No. 428 A.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. October 25, 1910.

R. November 7, 1910.

Monsieur Sazonow said to me yesterday, referring to Count Aehrenthal's recent speeches before the Austro-Hungarian Delegations, that he considered that the Count's declarations on the subject of Balkan politics constituted a remarkable triumph for

Monsieur Isvolsky.⁽¹⁾ The principles which Count Aehrenthal now proclaimed were precisely those which Monsieur Isvolsky had wished to establish during the exchange of views which took place between St. Petersburg and Vienna last winter. Although Monsieur Sazonow expressed himself briefly and somewhat vaguely on this point I understood him to mean that in speaking of the maintenance of peace and order in the Balkans and of the development of the economic relations between Austria-Hungary and the Balkan States Count Aehrenthal had now publicly adhered to Monsieur Isvolsky's "pacific development" formula, which Monsieur Sazonow considers that he was unwilling to do a year ago.

Monsieur Sazonow went on to say to me that he had learnt that a very decided antagonism existed between Count Aehrenthal and Herr von Kiderlen Wächter. He seemed to think that the latter's Bismarckian methods, which were not, he said, inspired by Bismarck's genius, were little to the taste of the Austrian Foreign Minister. Count Aehrenthal considered that Austria-Hungary should play a leading rôle in Europe. It was impossible for him in present circumstances altogether to shake off the "tutelle" of Germany. That, however, was his aim, and Monsieur Sazonow said he would not be surprised if Count Aehrenthal thought that a better understanding with Russia would assist him towards attaining it.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 224-5, No. 194.]

No. 197.

Mr. Findlay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/884.

41348/37626/10/7.

(No. 137.) Secret.

Sir,

Sofia, D. October 26, 1910.

R. November 14, 1910.

I have the honour to refer to my despatch No. 132 Secret of the 12th instant,⁽¹⁾ reporting Mr. Malinoff's suggestion to Mr. Paléologue, the French Minister in Sophia, that the time had come for the Powers of the Triple Entente to "express their sympathy and to promise their support to Bulgaria."

A few days after writing that despatch, I received a visit from Mr. Paléologue who showed me a telegram from his Government to the effect that he should abstain from making any advance to the Bulgarian Government and that, if he were approached either by the Government or by King Ferdinand, on the subject of Mr. Malinoff's proposal that the Triple Entente should promise their support, he should receive any communication which might be made with the strictest reserve.

I expressed my cordial concurrence in the cautious policy of the French Government, with which I was sure that His Majesty's Government would be in entire agreement. I pointed out to Mr. Paléologue that, as far as I understand the situation, both the French Government and His Majesty's Government were interested in the Near East to a lesser degree than Russia. Speaking generally, therefore, it was for Russia to take the lead. But, as Mr. Paléologue had himself told me in confidence, the French Government were convinced that, until the end of 1912 at the soonest, the reorganisation of the Russian Army would not be sufficiently advanced to admit of Russia backing her policy by force or by the show of force. It therefore seemed to me that it was advisable for France and Great Britain to play a waiting game and carefully to avoid initiating anything which might be regarded as a challenge

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 221-3, No. 192.]

by the Triple Alliance, and which we were not at present in a position to back with our full force, owing to the weakness of Russia. Mr. Paléologue agreed that our only policy was to await developments and to watch the situation closely, but he seemed anxious to ascertain whether King Ferdinand agreed with his Ministers in seeking the support of the Triple Entente.

I told him that Prince Ouroussoff, the Russian Chargé d'Affaires, had stated to me positively that no request for support had been made to him. None had been made to me, and I was inclined to think that Mr. Malinoff had approached the French Government on the subject chiefly because he was meditating armaments which would necessitate a loan of some 50 million francs. He probably hoped to obtain this loan in France.

Shortly after this conversation M. Paléologue told me that he had seen M. Dobrovitch, King Ferdinand's private secretary, and had told him of M. Malinoff's bid for the support of the Triple Entente. M. Dobrovitch had expressed the greatest surprise and had assured him that M. Malinoff had never spoken to the King on the subject.

At M. Malinoff's weekly reception of the Diplomatic Corps His Excellency asked M. Paléologue whether he had received any answer from the French Government on the subject of the request he had made for the support of the Triple Entente. M. Paléologue replied that the French Government were unable to consider His Excellency's communication until they were more clearly informed as to the attitude of the Bulgarian Government, and also as to that of King Ferdinand. There could be no question that the Triple Entente would alter their policy to suit Bulgaria. If His Excellency wished his proposals to be considered, Bulgaria would have to conform her policy to that of the Triple Entente, and His Excellency must enable him to state that King Ferdinand was in entire agreement with his Ministers. This reply appears to have caused M. Malinoff great embarrassment. He urged that it was quite unnecessary to submit his proposal to King Ferdinand until he was in a position to say whether it would be entertained—a point of view with which M. Paléologue entirely disagreed, adding that he would tell His Excellency frankly that he had mentioned the subject to M. Dobrovitch. At this M. Malinoff seemed to be much upset, and it may be confidently anticipated that His Excellency will have a most disagreeable interview with His Majesty when he is ultimately received, for I may observe that King Ferdinand had not then seen any of his Ministers since his return from three weeks absence in Hungary.

I have since seen Prince Ouroussoff, and having first induced him to say that Russia had no interest in forcing or risking a crisis at present, I repeated to him the arguments in favour of a cautious and expectative policy, which I had used to M. Paléologue as reported above. He entirely agreed as to their force and thanked me warmly for the information as regards the intentions of the Macedonian Internal organisation which I have reported in my despatch No. 135, Secret of yesterday⁽²⁾ and for other assistance which I have from time to time been in a position to give him.

You will observe from what I have had the honour to report in this despatch that M. Malinoff is continuing to form his policy on the most serious subjects without previous consultation with King Ferdinand. There can be no doubt that the Cabinet has not lately been under His Majesty's control, and that the relations between the King and his Ministers is [*sic*] strained.

It is impossible to say how long this state of things will last, but it is clear that under present circumstances the stability of the present Bulgarian Government is not sufficient to justify any serious dealings with them.

A copy of this despatch will be sent to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople by next messenger.

I have, &c.

M. DE C. FINDLAY.

(²) [*v. supra*, pp. 225-6, No. 195.]

Mr. Robertson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/975.
39532/39532/10/87.

(No. 59.)

Bucharest, D. October 26, 1910.

Sir,

R. October 31, 1910.

The King of Roumania did me the honour to receive me in audience on the 23rd instant, and spoke to me at length on the political situation throughout the world, but more especially in the Balkans.

Referring first to the alleged Turco-Roumanian Convention, His Majesty gave me clearly to understand that there was no truth whatever in the rumour. Roumania had no necessity for such a Convention and had no intention of concluding one. Her policy was to maintain the balance of power in the Balkans, and she would use all her influence, and, if necessary, armed force against any state that seemed likely to upset it, whether Bulgaria or Turkey. He had again and again stated, and all the Powers of Europe knew that He would never allow Bulgaria to add seriously to her strength and territory. In reply to a question of mine as to whether Roumania might eventually consider herself compensated for an advance of Bulgaria southwards, by a rectification of her own frontier, i.e. by the cession of Silistria and Varna, His Majesty said that the line originally spoken of at the time of the Treaty of Berlin had begun at Rustchuk, not Silistria, and would then have been of strategic value. Since that time such progress had been made in artillery and military science generally, that the frontier rectification in question would be of little value now, from the strategic point of view. Turning to the newspaper comments on the alleged convention, King Charles complained of the articles which had appeared in the French, English and Bulgarian press. The Roumanian Chargé d'Affaires in London had sent to Bucharest extracts from an English journal, of which His Majesty had forgotten the name, stating that feeling in England towards Roumania had, hitherto, been of the friendliest, but that now all the hatred and suspicion harboured against Germany would be harboured also against Roumania. I said that an English newspaper that wrote in such unmeasured terms could not be one of any very high standing, but His Majesty replied that even the smallest journal had some effect on public opinion. As for the Bulgarians, they had even gone so far as to accuse Queen Elizabeth of having lured the Queen of Bulgaria to Sinaia, so as to make it seem as if the relations between the two countries were quite normal and friendly, while King Charles himself was all the time plotting Bulgaria's ruin with Hakki Pasha.

The King then said that He did not believe in the probability of an alliance between the Balkan States against Turkey and Roumania. Bulgaria and Servia were on far from friendly terms, and He had noticed that King Ferdinand had not telegraphed to enquire after the Crown Prince of Servia. The relations between Servia and Montenegro were also not cordial. As for Greece, she was still a "quantité négligeable," and He could not believe that she would commit the folly of going to war in her present condition. He had, moreover, been favourably impressed by the reports which he had received of Monsieur Venizelos' pacific utterances.

The conversation then passed to the story that Roumania contemplated raising a loan of 250,000,000 francs with a view to the construction of a Black Sea fleet. The report was, His Majesty said, of course devoid of all foundation. It had emanated from the fertile brain of some mischief maker at Bucharest, and the telegram containing it must have been sent from across the frontier, as it would never have been allowed to leave Roumania. His Majesty did, however, contemplate ordering a destroyer or two at some time in the not far distant future, perhaps next autumn, but no money had yet been voted for the purpose.

Before I left King Charles commented with considerable satisfaction on Roumania's financial condition. The Minister of Finance had recently been with His Majesty and had shown that there was already a surplus of several million francs on the workings of the first six months of this year's Budget. As the harvest had been so good, this surplus should be very considerably increased before the end of the year. British capital had hitherto fought shy of Roumania and Roumanian loans, but perhaps the continued evidence of the soundness of the country's financial condition might bring about a change in the attitude of British financiers. While on the subject of loans, His Majesty remarked that he had noticed that the British Government had restrained Sir Ernest Cassel from taking up the Turkish loan. This surely constituted a departure from the well known policy of British Governments to refrain from all official intervention in business negotiations. I said that I knew nothing about the matter beyond what I had read in the newspapers. It seemed to me, however, clear that if British capitalists took up a loan in the circumstances in which it was said that this one was to be refused in France, it might react unfavourably on Anglo-French relations, and perhaps His Majesty's Government had thought right to give advice in this sense. The King remarked that, of course, Germany was ready to lend Turkey the money at any moment.

In this connection I may say that Galib Bey, the Turkish Chargé d'Affaires, called on me yesterday and spoke to me also on the subject of the loan. He said that the demands of France and the refusal of Great Britain to take up the loan had created a deplorable effect amongst the innumerable friends of those two countries in Turkey, and on public opinion generally. It was felt there that Russia, who did not want Turkey to build a fleet and feared that the money might be used for that purpose, had been the real instigator of France's extravagant demands. The money would now be found in Germany who would thus gain still further prestige at the expense of the Western Powers.

The note which it was stated had been addressed to the Persian Government would also react most unfavourably upon public opinion in Turkey, to the no small satisfaction of the friends of the Triple Alliance.

I have, &c.

ARNOLD ROBERTSON.

No. 199.

Mr. T. Russell to Sir E. Grey.

F.O. 371/981.
40060/40060/10/38.
Tel. (No. 62.)

Vienna, November 3, 1910.
D. 2.10 P.M.
R. 3.20 P.M.

Count von Aehrenthal told me last night that he was very glad of impending appointment of M. Sazonoff. He did not know him personally but all his information went to show that he is an earnest and reliable politician under whose direction Russian foreign policy would be conducted to the benefit of Russia and the general welfare of Europe.

He further expressed the opinion that his approaching visit to Berlin would act beneficially on the international situation.

Mr. Findlay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/835.

44845/44845/10/7.

(No. 159.) Secret.

Sir,

Sofia, D. December 7, 1910.

R. December 12, 1910.

I have the honour to report that my Servian colleague, M. Simitch, has just called upon me with the object of communicating secret information he had received from the Servian consul at Salonika as regards the secret deliberations at the recent Congress of the Committee of Union and Progress at that place. M. Simitch's information is practically the same, and appears to be derived from the same source, as that obtained by M. Choublier, French Consul-General at Salonika, précis of which I have had the honour to enclose in my immediately preceding despatch.⁽¹⁾

M. Simitch told me that in a recent conversation he had communicated the information in question to M. Malinoff, and in connection therewith had asked His Excellency the following questions:

1. In view of the fact that Turkish policy appeared likely in the future to be based on two leading ideas, viz.: the political domination of the Turkish race within the Ottoman Empire and the development of Pan-Islamism, did not M. Malinoff consider that the time had come for the Christian States in the Balkan Peninsula to discuss the situation with a view to finding points of agreement and of effecting, not a confederation, but a rapprochement, which would enable them to carry more weight with the Turkish Government and to safeguard their interests?

2. If such a rapprochement were effected, did M. Malinoff consider that the Christian States of the Balkans were strong enough to hold their own against Turkey?

3. If the Balkan States had to look elsewhere for support to which group of European Powers should they incline?

M. Simitch told me that M. Malinoff did not even thank him for the information he had communicated, and as His Excellency showed no signs of answering the questions put to him, M. Simitch proceeded to answer his questions himself as follows:

1. The time was certainly come for the Christian States in the Balkans to effect a rapprochement and to work together.

2. If such a rapprochement were effected it was not strong enough to stand alone.

3. As the Powers of the Triple Entente were more in favour of the policy of "The Balkans for the nationalities which inhabit them" than the Triple Alliance, it was to the Triple Entente that the Balkan States should look for support.

M. Malinoff was at length forced to take up the discussion and after a long tirade against the selfishness of Russian policy, told M. Simitch that he had recently been invited by one of the foreign representatives (M. Paléologue, I suppose) to make an appeal for support, and that it had come to nothing. M. Malinoff proceeded to throw cold water on the idea of a rapprochement with Servia and told M. Simitch that Bulgarian relations with Turkey were improving and he hoped that they would continue to improve. (M. Malinoff had told me a few days before that the détente which has recently taken place was merely due to, and would not outlast the winter.)

M. Malinoff finally gave M. Simitch to understand that Bulgaria could and would look after itself.

M. Simitch told me in conclusion that he could see no hope of closer relations between Bulgaria and her Christian neighbours as long as the present Government is in power.

You will have observed that M. Malinoff implied that his appeal for the support of the Triple Entente had been interdicted by M. Paléologue. His account of the incident is

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 371/1000. 44844/926/10/44.)]

in direct contradiction to that of M. Paléologue, but, as I have already stated in my despatch No. 148 of the 22nd ultimo,⁽²⁾ I have reason to believe that M. Paléologue may have conducted the conversation in such a way as to elicit M. Malinoff's appeal. I had the honour to point out at the time that it was strange that M. Malinoff should never have mentioned the subject either to the Russian Representative or to myself.

I have, &c.

M. DE C. FINDLAY.

MINUTE.

Servia lately has constantly tried to draw closer to Bulgaria but always without success. A Guéshoff-Daneff Gov[ernmen]t at Sofia might regard her advances with more sympathy.

H. N.
L. M.
A. N.
E. G.

(²) [Not reproduced, as it deals mainly with internal politics. The substance of the part relating to foreign affairs is sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 371/835 43146/40024/10/7.)]

No. 201.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/929.

46597/36838/10/27.

(No. 86.) Confidential.

Belgrade, D. December 16, 1910.

Sir,

R. December 28, 1910.

The Secretary General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs spoke to me some days ago about Montenegro and said that the Servian Government were much concerned at the attitude taken by that Kingdom. It was now harbouring those very Albanian tribes which up till last Spring had been its worst enemies and was encouraging their incursions into Turkish territory; there was something very unnatural about all this. The Servian Government satisfied that Montenegro could not be working alone had endeavoured to ascertain the cause of this change of attitude. At first they had ascribed it to an understanding with Bulgaria to create difficulties for the Young Turks, but they had come to the conclusion that the rulers of the two new Kingdoms were far too selfseeking in their aims and pursued too selfish a policy to unite, for the present at least, in a common cause. Then they searched for reasonable grounds of Italian intrigues, but in vain. Finally they had come to the conclusion that Austria-Hungary alone could be at the bottom of the whole affair, convinced as they are that her sole aim, while coquetting with the Young Turkish régime, is to foster elements of discord in the Empire which she may let loose at any moment to suit her will.

The Servian Government, Monsieur Spalaikovitch concluded, had already attracted the attention of the Russian, French and Italian Governments to the matter. The question was not one of immediate moment but they thought it was well that Servia's friends should keep their eyes open at Cetinje.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

MINUTE.

The Montenegrin Gov[ernmen]t professes to be very much embarrassed by the presence of these Albanian refugees.

R. P. M.
A. N.

No. 202.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/834.

46598/31158/10/89.

(No. 87.) Confidential.

Sir,

*Belgrade, D. December 17, 1910.**R. December 28, 1910.*

In the course of conversation with the Secretary General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs some days ago I asked him what he thought of the Grecco-Bulgarian *rapprochement*. He replied that the Servian Government did not attach any great importance to it, for in their opinion it could not last. The enmity which existed between the Patriarchate and the Exarchate was too deep rooted and the aims of the two nations too diametrically opposed to one another ever to allow of a permanent *entente* being concluded. However, for the time being this outward friendship of Greece and Bulgaria, while leaving Serbia in the cold, was not calculated to improve the relations between these three Balkan States.

About a month ago, Monsieur Spalaikovitch went on to say, the Greek Chargé d'Affaires had come to him under instructions from his Government with a view to sounding the Servian Government as to whether they would join in a protest which the Greek and Bulgarian Governments wished to address at Constantinople as regards the immigration and settlement in Macedonia of emigrants from Bosnia. He had told Monsieur Garadja in reply that the Servian Government were of their own accord taking all the necessary steps in the proper quarter i.e. in Bosnia itself, by the appointment of local committees &c. to prevent as far as possible the egress of the Mahomedan Slav element; and the Servian Authorities had themselves stopped some of these emigrants on their way to Turkey and had given them land in Servian territory along the Drina. But what the Servian Government would certainly not do would be to join the Greek and Bulgarian Governments in making representations at Constantinople, which would meet with no success and which would only serve to compromise them in the eyes of the Porte. Serbia wished to live in peace and harmony with Turkey and she was not prepared to sacrifice the friendly relations now existing for a shadow.

In reply to a question of mine, Monsieur Spalaikovitch explained to me at some length Serbia's object in keeping the Slav element in Bosnia. He said that the whole aim of Austria's policy was to clear that province of the Slav races and Germanise it as much as possible; that driving a German wedge into the Balkan peninsula at the back of the Serbo-Croatian element of the Monarchy, meant the weakening of that element and of the Serb races in general, and that it was therefore Serbia's duty as well as Serbia's primary interest to do her utmost to thwart the aims of Vienna. The facilities accorded to emigrants from Bosnia, and the rapidity with which the Province was being colonized, not so much by actual Austrians as by Germans from Saxony, showed clearly the intentions of Austria.

Reverting back to the Grecco-Bulgarian *rapprochement*, Monsieur Spalaikovitch went on to say that the only possible combination to ensure peace in the Balkans would be a Serbo-Bulgarian *entente*, but as the Bulgarians had refused to have anything to say to their advances, Serbia would now wait for them to take the first step. On my asking him what Roumania would think of such an agreement, Monsieur Spalaikovitch replied that she would favour it and would even not mind the aggrandisement of these two States in Macedonia—they had here, he hinted, assurances from Bucharest on this point—; what Roumania did not want was a too powerful Bulgaria, but the simultaneous development of Serbia and Bulgaria would not meet with opposition on her part.

I have the honour to enclose an interesting despatch on the same subject which has been addressed to me by Lieutenant-Colonel the Honourable H. D. Napier, Military Attaché to His Majesty's Legation.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

Enclosure in No. 202.

Lieutenant-Colonel Napier to Mr Barclay.

(No. 6.) Confidential.

Sir,

Belgrade, December 17, 1910.

I have the honor to inform you that a few days ago, when lunching at the Russian Legation, M. Hartwig, whom I have known for many years, told me that the Bulgarians and Servians could not come to any agreement. The Servians were willing, but the Bulgarians held back. M. Hartwig evidently did not see much prospect of doing any good, although he said that he and M. Tosheff, the Bulgarian Minister were both doing all they could. But now that the Bulgarians were inclining to a rapprochement with the Greeks, the Servians were beginning to think that they would do better to side with the Turks against them. The Servians had limited their Macedonian policy to the irreducible minimum, and only required an outlet to the sea, and a very small part of Macedonia. This the Bulgarians however would not concede.

Shortly after this conversation, I met M. Tosheff, and endeavoured to ascertain what his views were about Macedonia. M. Tosheff was discreet, and scouted the idea of partitioning a country that did not belong to one. He was in favour of the autonomy of Macedonia, which he believed was also the policy of Great Britain.

Yesterday I had an interview with M. Spalaikovitch. I explained to him that being the British Military Attaché both for Serbia and Bulgaria, it was important for me to know what their relations were to each other. M. Spalaikovitch said that their relations were correct but not cordial. I suggested that Macedonia was the bone of contention that kept them apart. He replied: "For the moment, Macedonia does not count so much as other matters. For instance, do you know what Bulgarian politics are? Do they favour the triple alliance or the triple entente? It is impossible to say. They cannot be relied upon. What are Servian politics? They have not changed. We are firmly on the side of the triple entente. But what is much more interesting at the present moment are the relations between Bulgaria and Greece. We know they have been coquetting with Greece now for several months, that they have been talking of uniting the two churches, &c. But during all this time they have not said a word to Serbia. Not a sign from Sofia or Athens." It was true that the Greek Chargé d'Affaires, M. Caradja, had recently sounded him as to whether the Servians would be inclined to join Greece and Bulgaria in a protest addressed to Turkey against the immigration of Mahomedans from Bosnia into Macedonia, and that he had replied in the negative, as these Mahomedans were of Servian nationality. But that was all. M. Spalaikovitch went on to say that the interests of Bulgarians and Greeks were so opposed to one another, that it was unthinkable they could really sink their religious differences. Neither side would give way. Still it was possible that they might agree on a general policy, and this could only be done at Serbia's expense. Thus not only had the Bulgarians done nothing towards a rapprochement with Serbia, although this policy had been repeatedly urged by the various members of the triple entente, but she had even put back the realization of any such rapprochement by her action. I said that if any agreement between Bulgaria and Greece must necessarily be at the expense of Serbia, that brought us round again to the real apple of discord, namely Macedonia. Being a Military Attaché, and therefore not officially concerned with political matters, I thought he might discuss things with me that it would not be proper to mention to His Majesty's representative; that I wanted to know really what prevented Serbia and Bulgaria from coming together, and what were Serbia's precise aspirations in Macedonia at the present time. M. Spalaikovitch said that the Servians had withdrawn their pretensions to a great extent, but there was a minimum beyond which they could not recede. He would send me a little sketch of this line.

I then asked him whether it was possible for Serbia, in the geographically unfavourable position which she held in relation to Austria, to resist pressure from the latter power in order to detach her from a Balkan States alliance. He replied that during the late crisis Austria would never have dreamed of attacking Serbia, if Turkey and Bulgaria had been Serbia's allies.

Thereupon I asked which the Servians valued most, supposing that all three powers could not come together, an alliance with Turkey, or an alliance with Bulgaria?

M. Spalaikovitch replied that, speaking very confidentially, notwithstanding the fact that they are dependent on Turkey commercially to such a great extent, (especially for the importation via Salonika of all war material) that they are bound to swallow countless insults and suffer cruelties, they would nevertheless throw the Turks over without hesitation for a firm alliance with Bulgaria.

At this juncture M. Milovanovitch came into the room, and M. Spalaikovitch told him what he was explaining to me. When he mentioned his intention of giving me a sketch, M. Milovanovitch declared that was not necessary and took me into an adjoining council chamber, where there was a large map of Macedonia hanging on the wall, and showed it to me.

M. Milovanovitch then proceeded to explain that formerly the Servians wanted to get possession of the whole of the west part of Macedonia, as far as the watershed of the Rivers Vardar and Strouma, but now they would be satisfied with a line (faintly marked in blue pencil on the map) including within the Servian sphere, as nearly as I can remember, Uskub, Ovsche Pole, Prilep, Okhrida, and thence westward to the Albanian coast, leaving Kumanovo, Monastir and Salonika to the Bulgarians. "The Servians," said M. Milovanovitch, "do not ask this of the Bulgarians as a favour, but declare that that is what they must have in order to exist, and what they mean to get. They say, or would say to the Bulgarians if they approached them: Is it not better to have us for your neighbours in a friendly alliance on these lines, than for us to become the Advanced Guard of the Austrian army marching down to Salonika? Without an exit to the sea we cannot live, and the refusal of the Bulgarians to recognize these claims, which are moreover effectually established on the spot, will drive us into the arms of Austria."

M. Milovanovitch ended by saying that Bulgaria could do nothing without Servian aid. I ventured to inform him that at Sofia the Bulgarians say precisely the same thing with regard to the Servians, namely, that the Servians can do nothing without Bulgaria. The difference however, M. Milovanovitch said, was that on their side the Servians were ready to stand in with the Bulgarians, but the Bulgarians were not prepared to do the same by them.

I have, &c.

H. D. NAPIER, *Lieutenant-Colonel,*
Military Attaché.

MINUTE.

A Serbo-Bulgarian alliance is a long way off in spite of Serbia's aspirations in that direction. The Bulgarians will never consent to a partition of Macedonia such as M. Spalaikovitch sketches, and it is not a very convincing threat that Serbia is likely to form the advance-guard of Austria in the Balkans.

J. D. P.
6.1.11.
R. P. M.
L. M.
A. N.
E. G.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 871/829.

46599/48108/10/3.

(No. 88.) Very Confidential.

Sir,

Belgrade, D. December 22, 1910.

R. December 28, 1910.

The *communiqué* published in the "Fremdenblatt" on the 6th Instant and referred to in my Despatch No. 84 Confidential of the 8th Instant,⁽¹⁾ whereby the Austrian Government stated that the Servian Government had given assurances to Count Forgach that influential circles in Belgrade had never given the slightest credence to the absurd reports that the Austro-Hungarian Minister or any of his staff had forged documents, was not allowed to drop here. On the 9th Instant the semi-official "Samouprava" stated "That all that the Servian Government considered they had to say about the Vassitch affair was exposed in their *communiqué* published on the 5th Instant" (enclosed in my above-mentioned Despatch), "and that they had neither anything to add to, nor anything to retract from that statement."

The "Fremdenblatt," however would have the last word and on the 12th Instant made the following rejoinder: "After enquiry in competent quarters we have to observe that the authentic statements contained in our *communiqué* naturally remain entirely unaffected."

Since then no further communications have been made on the subject in the official press, and, as the Secretary General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs told me, it is hoped that this controversy, in so far as Serbia is politically concerned, is at an end. Monsieur Spalaikovitch went on to say, in the strictest confidence, that when the Servian Government refused to insert in their first *communiqué* of the 5th Instant that they had given assurances to Count Forgach that they had never believed in his complicity in the affair, Count Forgach told Monsieur Milovanovitch that he would, if the refusal were persisted in, leave Belgrade and that the Legation would be left in charge of a *Chargé d'Affaires* indefinitely. The Servian Government however did not give way, nor did Count Forgach leave Belgrade; but the statement appeared in the "Fremdenblatt" as stated above. Subsequently, when Monsieur Milovanovitch insisted on issuing the *communiqué* of the 9th Instant, in which he said that the Servian Government had nothing to add to or anything to retract from their former statement, Count Forgach threatened him with the breaking off of diplomatic relations. To this His Excellency replied that the attitude of the Servian Government had been most correct throughout and that, if Austria-Hungary wished to break off relations at the moment when a new Commercial Treaty was about to enter into force and when the negotiations for other important Conventions (Consular, Extradition, Navigation, &c.) were proceeding, she must be the best judge. Monsieur Simitch, the Servian Minister in Vienna, to whom a similar menace was made by Count Aehrenthal with a further threat of publishing all the correspondence that had passed between the two Governments on the matter, replied, under instructions of his Government, that, if the Austro-Hungarian Government resorted to these steps, the Servian Government would then be obliged to hold the trial of Vassitch in public. Once more however the Austro-Hungarian Government did not carry out their threats. As Monsieur Spalaikovitch concluded Count Aehrenthal and Count Forgach have both entirely lost their heads in the affair.

That a man like Count Aehrenthal should have made such menaces without carrying them out does seem incomprehensible, and the only explanation appears to be his fear of the revelations which might have been made at a public trial of Vassitch.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It refers to accusations arising from the Friedjung trial. Mr. Barclay stated that the *Corps diplomatique* in Serbia was absolutely convinced of the complicity of the Austro-Hungarian Legation in the forgeries (F.O. 871/829. 44816/48108/10/3). Reference to the Friedjung trial is made *supra*, p. 95, No. 87, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

Such apprehensions on His Excellency's part do not speak in favour of the innocence of the Austro-Hungarian Government.

That Monsieur Milovanovitch on the other hand should have stood up against so powerful an opponent is not likely unless he were absolutely sure of his ground and confident in the result of any enquiry however far searching. I should not be surprised also if Monsieur Milovanovitch had had his back stiffened by Russia who would only be too ready to find an opportunity of showing up Count Aehrenthal's policy in his dealings with the Slav races and of overthrowing him if possible.

Professor Massaryk arrived in Belgrade yesterday and if, as is stated, place is found for him at the trial of Vassitch which begins to-day within closed doors, one may expect to hear startling revelations when the Delegations meet at Pesth next month.

I should mention that the "Stampa," a Belgrade paper notoriously in the pay of the Austro-Hungarian Legation, published a few days ago a statement to the effect that His Majesty's Government had, through their Representative here, advised the Servian Government to put a stop to the violent press attacks against Austria-Hungary. This statement having been reproduced in the Vienna and Budapest Press, the semi-official "Samoprava" published a *communiqué* the day before yesterday declaring it to be entirely false. I have the honour to enclose translations of these two statements.⁽²⁾ I should add that the steps actually taken by the German and Italian Ministers, similar to that attributed to me, had met with much resentment here, and the fact of endeavouring to bring odium on His Majesty's Legation is only another instance of Austrian methods in these parts.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

MINUTES.

It certainly seems true that Count von Aehrenthal and Count Forgach both have lost their heads in this matter.

A. P.

January 6, 1911.

It is an unfortunate characteristic of Count Aehrenthal's methods that he never hesitates to drag in Great Britain in a way the reverse of friendly. It is no doubt true that British interests might be, on the whole, very adversely affected by his fall from power, but he does not make it easy for a British Government to show or entertain confidence in him.

E. A. C.

Jan 6.

The announcement in the "Stampa" was particularly meaningless as it was sure to be contradicted immediately.

L. M.

E. G.

(2) [Not reproduced.]

No. 204.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward Grey,

Vienna, December 22, 1910.

I had the opportunity, while in Paris, of having a long talk with Isvolsky on the subject of Austrian policy in the Balkans. Isvolsky recognized that the outlook of affairs in the Near East in the coming spring was anything but reassuring, and he seemed to think that an outbreak of hostilities between Bulgaria and Turkey was more than probable. I observed to him that if this view was a correct one, it seemed to me to be all the more necessary for the Cabinets of St. Petersburg, London and Paris

(1) [Grey MSS., Vol. 2.]

to be ready with a plan of action should hostilities break out between Bulgaria and Turkey, for if the three Powers began to discuss what should be done when hostilities had already broken out, precious time would be lost, and I felt certain that we should find ourselves suddenly confronted by a definite plan of action on the part of Austria and Germany. Isvolsky appeared to recognize the danger of this, and he asked me what I thought should be done. I replied that the three Powers must then either put themselves in opposition to Austria, or come to terms with her, and I had reasons to believe that Aehrenthal would prefer to come to a reasonable understanding with the three Powers, rather than to have to face the risk of the outbreak of a European war, an eventuality which would be most distasteful to the Emperor Franz Joseph. First of all I pointed out to Isvolsky that from conversations which I had had with Aehrenthal I was convinced that the latter was of opinion that a collision between the Bulgarians and the Turks would in all probability lead to no decisive result. "Il y aura une bonne saignée, et puis tout rentrera à sa place," Aehrenthal had said to me at Marienbad this summer, and he believed that when the "bleeding" had been sufficient, the Powers could at their leisure take the matter in hand and settle the future of Macedonia. Secondly, I impressed upon Isvolsky that so long as the present Turkish régime could hold its own against a Bulgarian attack, that régime could depend upon the sincere moral and diplomatic support of Austria and Germany, but that, from observations made to me by Aehrenthal at various times, he evidently harboured a fear that the new Turkish régime might collapse at Constantinople, and if this should happen while the army was at the front, disorganization and anarchy might follow on the Turkish side, and Europe would then be confronted suddenly with a victorious advance of the Bulgarians either in the direction of Constantinople or of Salonica, or in both these directions at the same time. Should this happen, I feel sure that Aehrenthal has his plan of action ready; in Roumania he holds the key of the situation and he will use Roumanian pressure to push Bulgaria towards Constantinople and to obtain assurances at Sofia that she will not go in the direction of Salonica. As for Serbia, Aehrenthal can easily come to terms with her, by allowing her to secure, if she can, an extension of territory to the north of Salonica provided that she gives proper guarantees that the free transit of Austrian trade through such territory shall not be impeded. If events took such a turn, where would Russia be? In open enmity with her traditional protégé and friend Bulgaria, to which would have to be added the disagreeable prospect of seeing Serbia on friendly terms with Austria after having entered into a deal with the latter for the acquisition of a slice of Turkish territory. Isvolsky declared to me that Russia could not admit that the Bulgarians should establish themselves at Constantinople. I said to him that Aehrenthal would not admit that they should establish themselves at Salonica, and that therefore, unless Russia was ready to fight Austria about Balkan matters, all that Russian diplomatic opposition to Austria would lead to would be another humiliation for Russia, for Germany was certain to seize the opportunity of making a show of drawing her sword in defence of Austria, whether the latter were in need of it or not. Under these circumstances I inquired of Isvolsky in the interest of the maintenance of peace in Europe and of the prestige of the Triple Entente, whether Russia, England and France could not devise some plan of action in the event of hostilities breaking out in the Balkans, which it would not be displeasing or humiliating for Austria to accept. It seemed to me that if Austria and Germany were to be invited by Russia, France and England at the outbreak of hostilities to join with them in making it understood in Sofia that the Bulgarian army would not be allowed to advance on Constantinople or, on Salonica, there was reasonable possibility of such an invitation being accepted, and thus the five Powers, instead of losing valuable time in wrangling amongst themselves as to what should be done, might show a united front, at least in the earlier stages of a Near Eastern crisis. So long as the fighting was carried on in Macedonia, the Powers would abstain as far as possible from any intervention. Such a policy ought not to prove distasteful to the Turks, as it would be an attempt on the part of the Powers to save Salonica

and Constantinople for them in the event of Turkey suffering heavy reverses in the struggle. Isvolsky seemed to think that this idea had a great deal in it, but his hatred of Aehrenthal is such that he said to me "it is almost impossible for us Russians to have any dealings with that man. He will always prove false to his engagements, he has always deceived us. If he should go, something might perhaps be done." He pointed out to me another difficulty in the way of Russia coming to an understanding with Austria about Balkan affairs, and that was the Servian question. According to him, if the geography of the Balkan States had, on the ruins of the Turkish Empire in Europe, to be re-arranged in a new conference, public opinion in Russia would insist upon Serbia obtaining an outlet on the Adriatic Sea. Here Isvolsky indulged in strong criticism of the late Count Ignatieff and of the San Stefano Treaty⁽²⁾ which, he declared, had hampered Russia by its taking note only of Bulgarian interests and pretensions, and by entirely neglecting those of Serbia. I observed to Isvolsky that it was rather a large order for Russia to expect Serbia to be supplied with an outlet on the Adriatic, and that such a claim could only be satisfied by a cession of Austrian territory to Serbia which could only be done after Russia had waged a successful war with Austria, or by the cession of a part of Albania, which would be objected to by the Albanians and which would throw Italy into tremors of anxiety. If these somewhat exaggerated demands on the part of Serbia were to be realized, Russia would have to carry them through at the point of the sword, but there was a strong probability that she would again collapse before German menaces as she did during the Servian crisis last year. It seems to me that it would be wiser on the part of Russian statesmen if they tried to find an outlet for Serbia in the creation of a free port at Salonica with a kind of neutralized railway connecting Serbia with that port. . . .⁽³⁾

Yours truly,

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

(2) [Concluded between Russia and Turkey, February 19/March 3, 1878. v. *B.F.S.P.*, Vol. 69, pp. 732-44.]

(3) [The remainder of this letter refers to a number of topics not relevant to the subject of this chapter. They are mainly personal in character.]

No. 205.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/829.

Vienna, December 30, 1910.

47053/47053/10/3.

D. 8.10 P.M.

Tel (No. 66.) Most Confidential.

R. 9.57 P.M.

From conversations I have had with the French and Russian Ambassadors, I have obtained following information:—

German Ambassador on the arrival of the new Russian Ambassador made two attempts to persuade him that it was in their common interest to work for the overthrow of Count Aehrenthal, but Russian Ambassador turned a deaf ear to these proposals, and German Ambassador is now doing his best, by his language, to discredit our Russian colleague.

I learn from Russian Ambassador that Czar told him that Russia was too great a Power to allow her policy to be influenced by personal animosities between Ministers, and that he did not desire overthrow of Count Aehrenthal if the latter showed disposition to be friendly and considerate towards Russia. Evidence of this would be assumption by Austro-Hungarian authorities of a more friendly attitude in dealing with frontier incidents.

Russian Ambassador told me that M. Isvolsky had unnecessarily strained relations between Russia and Germany, but that the Czar, on the other hand, desired to cultivate good relations with all the Powers. At the Potsdam meeting⁽¹⁾ no political agreements were entered into, but a spirit of friendliness was manifested on both sides. Russian Ambassador asserted that Russia remained absolutely faithful to its engagements to England and France. These were the instructions that he had received from his Emperor at the interview he had with him on taking up his appointment.

MINUTE.

We have always suspected that the German government was working energetically for Count Aehrenthal's fall. Their effort to enlist Russia's assistance for this purpose is sure to come to Count Aehrenthal's knowledge and will not make the latter more amenable to Berlin influences.

E. A. C.
Dec 31
W. L.
A. N.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This meeting took place on November 4 and 5, 1910, between the German Emperor and the Czar. Reference will be made to it in a later volume.]

No. 206.

Extract from the Annual Report on Austria-Hungary for the Year 1910.

(Enclosure in Sir F. Cartwright's Despatch No. 1, D. January 1, 1911,
R. January 9, 1911.)

F.O. 855/855/11/3.

Russia.⁽¹⁾

11. At the close of 1909 Prince Ourousoff, the Russian Ambassador, left Vienna on account of ill-health, and he did not return to his post till the following spring. Before leaving Vienna he informed me that he had pressed upon M. Isvolsky the advisability of an attempt being made to bring Russia and Austria-Hungary into closer relations with each other, as unless the two Governments were in a position to talk freely together about Balkan matters, the interests of both in the Near East might severely suffer. At this moment the relations between the two countries, which had been very strained ever since the Bosnian annexation crisis,⁽²⁾ has been still further aggravated by the way in which the Czar's visit to the King of Italy at Racconigi had been carried out, and Prince Ourousoff told me that in his intercourse with Count Aehrenthal they mutually avoided discussing political issues of any kind with each other. This state of things could not be allowed to continue much longer, and Count Aehrenthal sought for a means of putting an end to it.

12. At the close of the year 1909 a Russian journalist of reputation, M. Wesselitsky, who represented the "Novoe Vremja" in London, came to Vienna and was received by Count Aehrenthal.⁽³⁾ His object in coming here was to sound the Austro-Hungarian Government as to their real views with regard to the Near East, and having convinced himself of Count Aehrenthal's sincere desire to maintain peace and the *status quo* in the Near East, he determined to proceed to St. Petersburg to communicate his impressions to M. Isvolsky. Before leaving Vienna he drafted an

⁽¹⁾ [The beginning of the Report deals with the relations of Austria-Hungary with foreign powers generally, and with Great Britain in particular.]

⁽²⁾ [For this subject *v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, Chapters XL and XLI.]

⁽³⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 114, No. 103.]

article the text of which he submitted to Count Aehrenthal, who approved of it being published provided M. Isvolsky would likewise give his consent. M. Wesselitsky, in an interview which I had with him at this time, explained to me that in his opinion he was convinced that the continuance of strained relations between his country and Austria-Hungary would prove to be disastrous to the real interests of Russia. He informed me that he would explain to M. Isvolsky that he thought the time was coming when an attempt should be made to bring about a gradual rapprochement between the two countries, and that he considered that such an attempt would succeed because he believed that Count Aehrenthal was sincerely in favour of it. M. Wesselitsky declared to me that he would press the following points upon M. Isvolsky as arguments in favour of a rapprochement:—(1) that Austria-Hungary is not likely to break up at the death of the Emperor Franz Joseph; (2) that the Austro-Hungarian Empire must therefore be taken into consideration as a permanent Power in Europe; (3) that the existence of Austria-Hungary is not a menace to Russian interests, as an understanding is possible between the two countries, based on a common desire to maintain the *status quo* in the Balkans and the integrity of the Ottoman dominions. M. Wesselitsky proceeded to St. Petersburg early in the month of January, and he was there received by M. Isvolsky. About the middle of January M. Wesselitsky's article on Austro-Russian relations appeared in the "Novoe Vremya," and it met with a considerable amount of approval, both in Russia and in this country, but the German press was very much annoyed by the allusion made in it to a statement attributed to Count Aehrenthal to the effect that Germany could exert no influence on Austria-Hungary's policy in Balkan matters, and that if any Power could do so it was Russia.

13. The conversation between St. Petersburg and Vienna now began in earnest, and by the middle of the month of February M. Isvolsky had drawn up a kind of *aide-mémoire* of a conversation which he had had with the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at St. Petersburg, in which he outlined the leading points of Russia's policy with regard to the Balkans. The Russian Chargé d'Affaires in Vienna informed me that this *aide-mémoire* had been transmitted to Count Aehrenthal, and that the latter had given out that he would reply to it in writing. On the 17th February I saw Count Aehrenthal and had a conversation with him on these matters; he showed a disinclination to admit that a document of any kind had passed between St. Petersburg and Vienna, and he would not discuss its possible contents, but he admitted to me that things were proceeding satisfactorily, though not rapidly. His general attitude seemed to me to be that it was Russia who was seeking an understanding with Austria rather than Austria who had anything definite to propose to Russia. He was, however, very emphatic as to the advantage it would be to both sides if the misunderstandings of the preceding year were cleared up and an atmosphere of confidence created between the two Governments.⁽⁴⁾

14. At this period of the negotiations M. Isvolsky proposed to Count Aehrenthal that the results of the rapprochement should be officially communicated by the two contracting parties to the other Powers, and this idea met with the approval of England and France. Count Aehrenthal from the first showed a strong disinclination to accept this proposal, being of opinion that in the matter of a rapprochement between two Governments there was no necessity of informing officially other Powers of its achievement. Apparently Count Aehrenthal's main idea was to keep the rapprochement from being in any way mixed up with other international questions. But there was another reason which early in the month of March began to exert its influence on Count Aehrenthal's views with regard to this question, and that was the somewhat sudden announcement that King Ferdinand of Bulgaria and King Peter of Servia were to visit St. Petersburg without loss of time. These visits were distasteful to Count Aehrenthal, perhaps not so much on their own merits as on account of the way in which they were carried out, and I found that at that time Count Aehrenthal showed

(4) [References to the Russo-Austro-Hungarian communications of February 1910 are given *supra*, p. 112, No. 100; p. 114, No. 103; p. 119, No. 106; pp. 126-7, No. 113; pp. 130-1, No. 120; pp. 143-5, No. 136.]

a desire to draw back somewhat from his former intentions with regard to the negotiations with Russia. A few weeks before it appeared as if he entertained the idea of driving the negotiations to a point where something definite would have been produced which could then possibly have been communicated to the Powers by Austria-Hungary and by Russia, conjointly or individually. I now found that Count Aehrenthal was assuming the attitude that there was nothing to communicate to the other Cabinets, and that, on the whole, it would be better to pull up and to be satisfied with the results so far obtained, namely, that normal relations had been restored between St. Petersburg and Vienna.⁽⁵⁾

15. Suddenly, towards the end of March, Count Aehrenthal decided to close the conversation with St. Petersburg, and, giving M. Isvolsky scarcely twenty-four hours' notice, he published in the Austrian newspapers a communiqué on the subject of the rapprochement with Russia. M. Isvolsky seems to have been very much annoyed by the action taken by Count Aehrenthal, and he immediately replied by publishing a communiqué of his own, to which he added a *dossier* of documents, many of which were of a confidential nature, without having previously obtained the consent of the Austro-Hungarian Government to do so.⁽⁶⁾ The result of this was the cold announcement to the world that cordial relations had been restored between Austria-Hungary and Russia, but as a matter of fact these relations were almost worse at the close of the conversation between St. Petersburg and Vienna than they were at the opening of it.

16. This attempt to bring about a rapprochement between Austria-Hungary and Russia failed, and it may be said that during the remainder of the year these two countries have entertained nothing but very cold relations with each other. The discovery that Colonel Martchenko, the Russia[n] military attaché in Vienna, had been engaged in somewhat clumsy attempts to obtain secret information with regard to the Austrian army, necessitated his leaving his post, and this scandal did not contribute to improve the relations between the two countries. The Russian Government retorted by arresting a certain Baron Ungern-Sternberg, an Austrian journalist living in St. Petersburg, on the charge of spying, and he was declared to have had relations with the Austro-Hungarian military attaché. Prince Ourossoff, the Russian Ambassador in Vienna, told me that in minor questions he met with an ill-will at the Austrian Foreign Office which was very detrimental for the continuance of good relations between the two countries. According to the Prince, innocent Russian subjects were continually being arrested by the Austro-Hungarian military authorities in Galicia on unfounded accusations of spying; these, the Ambassador said, were kept in prison for many months, and they were then generally discharged for want of proof to convict them. The Austro-Hungarian authorities retort that Galicia is invaded by Russian spies, and that, if not the Russian Government, at least Russian societies carry on an anti-Austrian propaganda among the Ruthenians which is very annoying to the local authorities. Whether the arrival of a new Russian Ambassador in Vienna⁽⁷⁾ will open a way to a modification of the zeal of the local authorities in Galicia, which would be the first step to a beginning of a real understanding between Austria-Hungary and Russia, remains to be seen.⁽⁸⁾

⁽⁵⁾ [cp. *supra*, pp. 143-5, No. 136.]

⁽⁶⁾ [cp. *supra*, pp. 149-55, Nos. 142-3, and *encl.*]

⁽⁷⁾ [M. de Giers was appointed Russian Ambassador at Vienna in November 1910.]

⁽⁸⁾ [The rest of the Report is concerned with the general foreign policy and internal affairs of Austria-Hungary.]

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward Grey,

Vienna, January 4, 1911.

Aehrenthal's position at the present moment is not a pleasant one, but it is very difficult to predict with any degree of accuracy whether it has been really shaken by recent events or not. He has just now to withstand two attacks, one from the side of Germany—supported by the possible sympathy of Russia—and the second from the stir which has been made by the scandal caused by the exposure of forged documents at the Belgrade trial. I will try and summarize for your information the views which are held here by competent persons with regard to these matters.

Ever since the close of the annexation crisis—during which Germany stood ostentatiously by the side of Austria—Tschirschky, the German Ambassador here, has been, I think, presuming too much on the obligations which in his opinion Austria-Hungary owed to Germany for the assistance given to her during that crisis. The result has been personal friction between Aehrenthal and Tschirschky. To the personal feud between these two men must be added the conviction which is gradually growing in Berlin political circles that Aehrenthal intends to run side by side with Germany in the Triple Alliance and that he will not be satisfied with merely following in her wake. Moreover, the prestige which Aehrenthal has acquired in Europe as a successful statesman and as one of grip, combined with the fact that he has become the doyen of the Foreign Ministers in the Triple Alliance, gives umbrage at Berlin and creates there the impression that Germany is being somewhat overshadowed by Austria-Hungary. In addition to this Kiderlen-Waechter's domineering character causes him to find the presence of Aehrenthal in Vienna inconvenient, and probably inclines him to wish for the prompt disappearance of the Austrian Minister from office. These German sentiments have created an anti-Aehrenthal current in certain circles here which feel the influence of German inspiration. Aehrenthal is rather off-hand in his treatment of press people and he has thereby offended a good many of them, and a man like Dr. Singer, President of the International Press Association, spoke to me the other day in anything but favourable language of Aehrenthal. To Aehrenthal's lukewarm supporters—if not open enemies—may be added the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his present friends, the leaders of the so-called feudal aristocratic party, men like Counts Franz Thun and Sylva-Tarouca. It is no doubt difficult for the German Government to show too openly their hand, for in Vienna their direct interference in Austrian internal affairs would be resented; for this reason, no doubt, they are trying to make use of Russian animosity against Aehrenthal in order to bring that statesman down. When M. de Giers, the new Russian Ambassador, arrived here two months ago, Tschirschky made two separate attempts to persuade him that it was to their common advantage to join forces to upset Aehrenthal. Dr. Szeps, the editor of the "Fremdenblatt," told me that Tschirschky at that time spoke to him of M. de Giers in the highest terms, and, I understand, the German Ambassador added that the Czar had instructed the new Russian Ambassador to have confidential relations with the German Embassy and to allow himself to be guided by himself—Tschirschky. M. de Giers having turned a deaf ear to Tschirschky's proposals, the latter now talks of him as a man of weak character and poor intelligence. Quite lately it seems to me that a change is taking place in pan-German circles here and in Germany with regard to Aehrenthal. They appear to show a tendency to rally somewhat to his side and to cease their attacks, and this, I believe, has been brought about by Professor Masaryk's attitude with regard to the forged documents. Thus last week the Munich "Neueste Nachrichten," a rabid pan-German organ, had an article in favour of Count Aehrenthal, and Herr Gessmann, one of the leaders here of the Christian Socialist Party—generally

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 2.]

hostile to Aehrenthal—spoke out in his favour a few days ago. The German elements here are beginning to realize the danger of letting Aehrenthal go over board amid the acclamations of Serbia and all the South Slavs in the Dual Monarchy.

As far as I am able to judge the Masaryk disclosures will shake Aehrenthal's position less than the intrigues against him from Berlin. I will try and explain to you the reason why. In the first place, the moral atmosphere which prevails in the Dual Monarchy is entirely different from that which exists in Anglo-Saxon countries; there the only question which interests the public is the technical guilt or innocence of an accused person; here no one cares anything about this, at least in political trials, when all sane judgment is warped by racial hatreds. Moderate men here recognise that Aehrenthal has committed errors of judgment, but that on the main issues he has acted rightly and for the advantage and glory of the Dual Monarchy. The services which he has rendered to this country efface his errors in matters of detail. The view which is held here by calm and unbiassed persons with regard to Aehrenthal's connection with the forged documents may be stated to be as follows.

Aehrenthal was far-sighted enough to see that the new Turkish régime would soon develop exaggerated chauvinistic tendencies which would manifest themselves in the assertion of fancied Turkish rights in the direction of Egypt, Crete and Bosnia and Herzegovina; this would lead sooner or later to the creation of a breach between Austria-Hungary and Turkey, a state of things detrimental to the interests of the former. Aehrenthal could not announce this to the world as his justification for the annexation of the two provinces, nor could he officially justify it by pointing to the illegal act just committed by Bulgaria in declaring her independence. He had therefore to seek for another excuse for his action and he consequently invented the Serbo-Croatian conspiracy. Here it is said that a Serbo-Croatian conspiracy permanently exists against Magyar and German rule in the Dual Monarchy, just as in protestant countries in the 17th century it was usually believed that a Popish plot permanently existed against their sovereigns. Aehrenthal therefore gave instructions to the Belgrade Legation, which lay in the centre of anti-Austrian agitation, to find material proving the existence of a conspiracy. Count Forgach, wishing to please his chief, instructed his shady underlings to look out for the necessary evidence in support of this, and the moment it became known in Belgrade that the Austro-Hungarian Legation was ready to spend money for the purchase of documents, documents were offered for sale. Whether these were genuine or not probably troubled Aehrenthal very little at the time; they could always serve their purpose, which was to keep the Austrian press blazing against Serbia during the crisis, and for Aehrenthal what appeared in the newspapers, whether true or false, mattered little. No sensible person, he would say to himself, takes everything he reads in the newspapers as gospel truth. Very few people here believe that Aehrenthal really had a hand in the direct manufacture of the forged documents, though it is quite possible that Count Forgach shut his eyes to much of what was going on among his underlings. As regards the Agram trial, Aehrenthal may rightly say that he passed over all the documents in the possession of the "Ballplatz" to the judicial Hungarian authorities, and thereby washed his hands of them. He no doubt contends that it was for the judicial authorities to examine them carefully and to see whether they were genuine or not. The Magyar hatred of the Croats is however so intense, that the Hungarian judicial authorities were inclined to accept everything as genuine which told against the accused. I have been informed confidentially that the Archduke Franz Ferdinand strongly believed in the genuineness of the documents and that the knowledge that such was his opinion had its influence on the judges. The Emperor, I am told, on the other hand warned the judicial authorities to be careful and he expressed some doubt with regard to the genuineness of these papers.

Professor Masaryk's violent denunciation of Aehrenthal if continued, will do the latter in the long run more good than harm. Masaryk is a fanatically honest man but absolutely devoid of political sense, and he does not see that his violent attacks

on Aehrenthal are being attributed by the general public to racial hatred. Nobody here cares very much about the technicalities of the case: the Germans, the Magyars, the Italians and even the Poles insinuate that if the accused in the Agram trial were technically not quite guilty, yet their sentiments were so notoriously anti-Austrian at the time of the Bosnian crisis, that morally they can be classed as traitors to their country. They therefore enjoy little sympathy from a large section of the population which forms the Dual Monarchy. People here say that, although the judicial authorities are not perfect in Hungary and sometimes commit slight errors, things would be ten times worse if the South Slavs and the Croats got on top of the Magyars. The latter consider that highly civilized races may at times have to make use of deceptions to ward off attacks from brute force—by which term they mean the South Slavs. Similar sentiments seem to prevail in the Southern States of America where the white man, in public at least, will never admit that a moral error or a real injustice has been committed by the lynching of a negro.

Whether the attacks against Aehrenthal coming from the German side, or from Professor Masaryk, will have any effect by themselves on Aehrenthal's position, is doubtful, for as yet I have been unable to find that there are any signs of a weakening of the Emperor's confidence in his Foreign Minister and so long as the Emperor supports him, he will remain in office. It must be remembered that Count Aehrenthal has strong claims to his Imperial Master's favour: he has successfully solved the question of the relations between the Dual Monarchy and the annexed provinces which for thirty years were left vague and unsettled, and he has done this without launching Austria-Hungary into a war with any of her neighbours. He has done more: in spite of the stress and strain of the annexation crisis, he has placed the present relations between this Empire and the other Great Powers again on the best of footings, Russia excepted, and even with Russia there are signs that a rapprochement is near. This fact must give particular pleasure to the Emperor who is a sincere lover of peace, and he cannot help approving of the general diplomatic work of Aehrenthal in spite of its minor errors, for that Minister has raised the prestige of the Dual Monarchy in Europe to a height which has not been reached by her since the days of Metternich. Talleyrand asked of his diplomats that they should be lucky; Aehrenthal has been lucky for things in the end have turned out well for him. The Emperor appreciates this and I do not think he will sacrifice Count Aehrenthal to the clamours raised by Professor Masaryk. Everybody here would look upon this as a lowering of the flag of the Hapsburgs to the rancour and to the outcries of Servia, and as a kind of apology on the part of the Dual Monarchy for her treatment of the Serbs: I do not think that the Emperor will ever bring himself willingly to submit to such a humiliation.

Yours truly.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

No. 208.

Mr. Lindley to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 805/805/11/7.

(No. 5.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sophia, D. January 5, 1911.

R. January 9, 1911.

I have the honour to transmit herewith a despatch addressed to me by Lieut[enant]-Col[onel] the Hon[ourable] H. D. Napier, Military Attaché to this Legation, reporting an interesting conversation with the Chief of the Bulgarian General Staff on the subject of the present condition of the Servian army and the distribution of Turkish troops in Europe.

There can be little doubt that if the Bulgarian Government are once persuaded that the Servian army has a real military value they will look upon good relations, and

possibly even an alliance, with that country with a much more favourable eye than they appear from Mr. Findlay's despatch No. 159 of the 7th ultimo⁽¹⁾ to do at present.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS O. LINDLEY.

Enclosure in No. 208.⁽²⁾

Lieutenant-Colonel Napier to Mr. Lindley

(No. 1.)

Sir,

Sofia, January 4, 1911.

I have the honour to inform you that yesterday, during the course of conversation with General Fitcheff, Chief of the Staff of the Bulgarian army, I sounded him on his ideas with reference to Servian affairs.

He seemed to think that the Servian army was making some progress; he had information of the Servian manœuvres through an ex-officer correspondent, who had been educated at the Military Academy at St. Petersburg, and was present at the Bulgarian manœuvres last autumn. General Fitcheff said that he had not yet had time to go through his military attaché's report, which was based on this correspondent's information (the military attaché not having been present himself), but he had the impression that the Servian army, which up to now had been little more than a militia, was making real progress.

In the region of politics he could only speak as a private individual, but apart from the mutual lack of confidence between the two countries, the question of Macedonia still divided them. Bulgarian public opinion held to the boundaries of the San Stefano Treaty, while the Servians wanted the line of the Vardar thalweg.

General Fitcheff then referred to the Turkish reorganisation. This is evidently causing him great anxiety. He told me that the Turks were forming in Europe seven army corps of three divisions each, and in addition three independent divisions. He reckoned that twenty-one of these divisions could be directed against Bulgaria.

Later in the day I happened to meet the Turkish Minister, Assim Bey, who asked me what news I had from Servia. I told him that the Servians were trying to reorganise their forces and had ordered a quantity of guns, and suggested that possibly they had been fired by the Turks' example. Assim Bey protested that the Turks were obliged to prepare to defend their own territory; that they had no aggressive design, and, in fact, urgently required ten years of peace in order to put their own house in order; that it was true they were organising seven army corps in Europe, and they intended them to be self-supporting, without having to depend on reservists from Turkey in Asia to fill up their ranks, but that even so they were not arming in the same proportion as, for example, the Bulgarians. He declared that there were 900,000 Turks in Bulgaria and only a little over 3,000,000 Bulgarians. I replied that the existing statistics showed that there were only about 500,000 Turks here, according to the last census, and that they were diminishing yearly. Assim Bey, however, assured me that that was not the case. On the contrary, they were increasing, as the coming census would show, and that if the Turks armed in the same proportion as the Bulgarians, who had an active army of 300,000 men, that is, 10 per cent. of their population, the Turks would have an army of 600,000 men in Europe instead of seven army corps.

I have ventured to report the above conversations in order to draw attention to the elements of trouble that are again brewing in the Balkans. A reference to my despatch to Mr. Barclay at Belgrade, No. 6, Confidential, dated the 17th December⁽³⁾ last, shows that the Servians have largely moderated their former pretensions in

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 231-2, No. 200.]

⁽²⁾ [Colonel Napier's despatch is printed from the copy in the *Confidential Print*, as the original was sent to the War Office.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 234-5, No. 202, *encl.*]

Macedonia, and I am inclined to agree with General Fitcheff that an understanding between Servia and Bulgaria in regard to Macedonian spheres of influence is no longer an impossibility. The crux of the matter lies in the progress of the Servian army. Once the Bulgarians are persuaded that it is a solid asset, they may be inclined to risk the danger of foreign complications resulting from an alliance with Servia.

But whether either Bulgarian or Servian interests would be furthered by such an alliance is another question, and I would merely suggest that the general interests of peace in Europe appear to me to point to the advisability of Bulgaria endeavouring to maintain somewhat more sympathetic relations with Servia, in order to avoid driving her into the arms of Austria, while carefully avoiding anything in the nature of a definite alliance, which would be sure to excite the active animosity both of Austrians and Turks.

As far as the policy of the Bulgarian army is concerned, nothing could be more pacific than its present attitude.

I have, &c.

H. D. NAPIER, *Military Attaché.*

No. 209.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

St. Petersburg, January 12, 1911.

I am much obliged to you for your long and interesting letter by last bag.⁽²⁾

I am, on the whole, inclined to take a more favourable view of the situation than when I last wrote, and after what Sazonow told me in the conversation which I had with him on the 8rd instant I must modify what I wrote with regard to the dangers of an eventual Austro-Russian understanding. I had always imagined that he had inherited Iswolsky's hatred of Aehrenthal. Louis had told me that he had, on more than one occasion, expressed himself in terms of strong personal dislike and distrust of that statesman, and the Emperor's language at my Audience was still more emphatic. I was therefore somewhat surprised to find that Sazonow could speak of Aehrenthal's remaining in office with perfect equanimity, and that he could even admit that it might be to our interest that he should remain, for fear of his making way for a Minister who might prove more amenable to German influence. He admitted that public opinion in this country was so incensed against Austria that an understanding would be difficult at present, but he is evidently prepared to broach the subject at Vienna, should the situation in the Balkans become so acute as to render it advisable in the interests of peace. He would, however, limit it in such an event to some sort of "protocole de désintéressement" having for its object the maintenance of the "status quo," and he would be in favour of inviting the other Powers to associate themselves in any self-denying engagement which the two Governments might take.

I cannot help feeling that either Berchtold has brought with him some conciliatory messages from Vienna, or that Aehrenthal has made some advances to Giers. It seems that Tschirschky rubbed the latter up the wrong way in proposing that they should work together to bring about Aehrenthal's fall, while Aehrenthal on the contrary appears to have made a good impression on him; but however this may be, it is satisfactory to know that Tschirschky's clumsy advances were a failure and that Russia seems now disposed to reconcile herself to Aehrenthal's continuance in office.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. I of 1911.]

⁽²⁾ [This letter cannot be identified.]

It is also satisfactory to hear that Sazonow does not contemplate anything in the shape of a secret understanding with Austria and that he would prefer an arrangement to which all the other Powers could become parties. . . .⁽³⁾

Ever yours.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

⁽³⁾ [The remainder of the letter is concerned with the course that the Russo-German negotiations were taking, as rumoured in the Press]

No. 210.

Mr. C. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 2552/2027/11/39.

(No. 5.) Confidential.

Sir,

Belgrade, D. January 18, 1911.

R. January 28, 1911.

I have the honour to report that I called on M. Milovanovitch the day before yesterday upon his return from Bucharest, where he had been spending the Christmas Holidays (o.s.) with his wife who is a Roumanian. As I had heard that he had taken the opportunity of his visit to discuss the question of the railway bridge across the Danube in connection with the trans-Balkan Railway, and also that there were rumours that he had been approached with a view to conclude some sort of military convention directed against Bulgaria, I began by asking His Excellency how the railway question stood at present. He replied that he had found the Roumanians in the best of dispositions and that there was no doubt that they would now consent to the bridge being built between Gruia and a point near Raduyevats, instead of between Turn Severin and Kladovo, as had been agreed upon by Servia and Roumania some years ago. Turn Severin has always been a stronghold of the Roumanian Liberal party, and with the advent of the Conservatives to power the present Government would have a much easier task to effect this change. It would require the Roumanians building a line from Gruia to Craiova but this would be all to their advantage as the region traversed was a most fertile one. Upon my asking M. Milovanovitch whether there was any truth in the vague rumours I had heard of his having discussed the question of a Serbo-Roumanian *entente* directed against Bulgaria, His Excellency neither confirmed nor denied the rumour, but from his manner and the conversation that followed I could see that such a question had been, if not actually discussed, at least touched upon in Bucharest. He went on to explain at some length that there was no necessity for any formal *entente* between the two Countries. The position of the Balkan States, he said, was such at present that if any one of them moved to further its own interests all the others would turn upon that State. Roumania was the State which, chiefly owing to its geographical situation had the least aspirations; she was the most stable factor in the Balkans and the firm partisan of the *status quo* and, as such therefore, she would naturally resent, and probably resist, the aggrandisement of any one particular State. The other Balkan States on the other hand all had greater or lesser ambitions, which were moreover antagonistic to one another, and, unless these ambitions could be gratified simultaneously, the attempt of any one State to gain its selfish ends at [*sic*: to] the detriment of the others would at once meet with the strongest opposition both on the part of the injured parties as well doubtless as on that of Roumania, who could not allow the abnormal development of any one State. Bulgaria at the present moment was the most restless State; her policy changed from day to day and it was certain that if she made a *coup de tête* she would find herself thwarted. But the same applied to any other State and it was therefore quite useless for Servia to come to a special *entente* with Roumania. Any foolhardy enterprise on the part of Bulgaria, without

previous arrangement with other States, would find Serbia on the side of those endeavouring to maintain the *status quo*, and consequently on the side of Roumania.

I remarked that the conclusion of such an *entente* as had been rumoured had seemed to me improbable as it ran counter to the idea of a federation of the Balkan States so much advocated by Russia. His Excellency replied that this idea appeared for the moment impossible of realisation. Serbia herself fully grasped that a friendly co-operation of all the Balkan States was the only means by which they could acquire that strength which would be necessary to them to safeguard their very existence; but the other States did not seem to understand this. Serbia had been quite prepared to draw closer to Bulgaria, but all her advances had met with no response, and on the contrary Bulgaria had ostentatiously drawn closer to Greece behind Serbia's back; in Sofia they seemed to think that Serbia had no claims whatever in Macedonia, and they persistently ignored her. Only the other day the Bulgarian Premier, in speaking in Vienna on the subject of Bulgarian foreign relations had studiously omitted any mention of Serbia as if she were non-existent. However he would not give up hope and if Bulgaria came forward to them with a genuine proposal, Servians would always be ready to respond and to stand by her side if necessary.

There had, M. Milovanovitch concluded, never been more than three possible solutions to the Near Eastern question:

(1) The gradual absorption of Turkey by Russia, an ambition which was wrecked by the Treaty of Unkyar Skelessi [*sic*] and the Crimean war, (2) the development of several strong Independent States, a solution which could not possibly be permanent if these States were always quarrelling amongst themselves and were a source of constant anxiety to Europe, and (3) the partition of the Peninsula between Russia and Austria-Hungary. To avoid that last solution ought to be therefore the sole aim of the Balkan States, but they could only avoid it if united and that seemed for the moment an insuperable difficulty.

The fact that no *entente* had been concluded between Serbia and Roumania although the subject had probably been touched upon during Monsieur Milovanovitch's visit to Bucharest was yesterday morning confirmed to me by the French Minister. M. Descos, who is on very intimate terms with M. Milovanovitch, told me, as I had the honour to report by telegraph,⁽¹⁾ that His Excellency had confided to him that he had had a most interesting conversation of over two hours' duration with King Charles, and that the views then exchanged had revealed a certain identity of interests in the policy pursued by Serbia and Roumania towards Bulgaria consequent upon this last country's attitude in Macedonia, but that there was no question whatever of an *entente* having been come to between them. Such an *entente*, His Excellency had said, was unnecessary for the special interests in play on the day of crisis would guide the individual policy of all the Balkan States.

The Russian Minister, to whom I have also spoken on the subject of the Serbo-Bulgarian relations, said to me that for the whole of the past year he had been dinning the refrain of a *rapprochement* with Bulgaria into the ears of M. Milovanovitch, M. Pashitch and others, that the Servians were quite willing but that the stubbornness with which all their advances had been met at Sofia made it quite disheartening. The Russian Minister at Sofia had also done his best, but King Ferdinand always turned a deaf ear to his arguments; both His Majesty, he said and the Bulgarian Government look upon Serbia as a negligible quantity and consider any arrangement with her as worthless. M. Hartwig also deplores the strained relations existing between this country and Montenegro, but, as he said, all these small States are so imbued with their own importance and so selfish in all their ambitions that it is impossible to bring them to reason.

The conclusion of the foregoing would seem to be that Serbia, whilst quite prepared to come to terms with Bulgaria, is equally prepared to side with Roumania in resisting

⁽¹⁾ [Mr. Barclay's telegram No. 1 of January 17 (F.O. 2027/2027/11/39). It is not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above.]

any encroachments detrimental to her interests which Bulgaria might make in Macedonia, and on the other hand that an accord between all the Balkan States, such as would lead to their ultimate Federation is, unless they radically change their policy, impossible of realisation.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

No. 211.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 4165/8110/11/3.

(No. 23.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. January 31, 1911.

R. February 4, 1911.

Count Aehrenthal, Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, yesterday gave a short exposé of foreign affairs to the Delegations at Budapest.

His Excellency said that in the short period of time since the last meeting of the Delegations no question had arisen to endanger the peace of Europe. All the great Powers were principally occupied with their internal problems and had been endeavouring to strengthen their relations with each other. As regards Austria-Hungary herself he need only confirm what he had said some weeks ago, that she holds firm to her alliances and to the cultivation of good relations with all Powers. The Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs had in happy and significant terms characterised the maintenance of peace and the territorial status quo in general as well as of the integrity of the Turkish Empire and of the Balkan States, as the particular aim of the three allied Powers.

In his speech of the 11th December last the German Chancellor had been able, in a manner which must satisfy every friend of the consolidation of European policy, to explain Germany's relations towards England and towards Russia. He spoke of her inclination to come to an understanding with England by means of a frank and friendly exchange of views on their respective interests: this was the surest means of removing the mistrust felt regarding their respective Armaments.

Further the Chancellor had been in a position to state that the exchange of views at Potsdam⁽¹⁾ had led to a rapprochement of Russia and Germany without any change having arisen in the general lines of their policy. This rapprochement had been brought about on the basis of general principles, among which was the maintenance of the "status quo" in the near East, and also an agreement as to respective interests in Persia.

Count Aehrenthal added that, in accordance with the intimate relations existing with Germany, he had been informed in detail by the Chancellor of these "pour-parlers" between Germany and Russia. He had expressed his satisfaction and pointed out that the principles thus confirmed at Berlin and Potsdam as to the strictly conservative policy to be observed in the near East were in complete accordance with Austria's programme. The latter's interests in Persia were not important ones. But the Russo-German understanding on the questions of communications in Persia ought to serve to permanently enforce the principle of the open door in that country enunciated three years ago by both Russia and England.

Count Aehrenthal then repeated his declaration made in November last that it was in Austria-Hungary's interest to further the independence and peaceful development of Turkey and the Balkan States. This point of view was prominent in the exchange of views which he had had with the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs in the spring of 1910. The agreement then found to exist led him now to hope that

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 240, No. 205, note ⁽¹⁾.]

Austria-Hungary's relations with Russia, which were at present good, would be further developed in a satisfactory manner.

No change had taken place in the good relations with England and with France. He could only endorse the opinion expressed recently by Monsieur Pichon in the French Chamber that there was no opposition of interests between France and Austria-Hungary in spite of the fact that they belonged to different groupings of Powers.

His Excellency referred with satisfaction to the new Commercial Treaty with Servia now in force, and announced that a similar Treaty with Montenegro had been concluded, and would shortly be submitted for Parliamentary approval.

In conclusion the Minister said that he felt himself obliged again to lay stress upon the fact that in these days of constant change the course of events might often be precipitated and, while public opinion in all countries was unfortunately so easily excited, the political barometer might be found pointing to bad weather. Therefore foreign policy must be able to dispose of an army and a fleet ready for war if it is to act effectively in the interests of the State and of general peace.

Count Aehrenthal's 'exposé' was followed by a long speech by Dr. Kramarz, who criticised recent Austro-Hungarian policy from the anti-German point of view with his usual sharpness.

The axis of central European politics had, he said, entirely shifted from Austria to Germany who (in contrast to the passive attitude of the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office following on the high expectations aroused by the Annexation) had played her cards admirably, with the help of such striking incidents as the German Emperor's visit to Vienna, and the 'shining armour' episode. In the background however a new tableau was all the time being prepared, called the "Potsdam Interview," which, in spite of official declarations had been a painful surprise to France and also to Austria; even though attempts had been made to maintain that the chief object of that interview was to bring about a reconciliation between Vienna and Petersburg.

After discussing the effects of the interview on Persia and the Bagdad Railway Dr. Kramarz went on to say that the decision reached at Potsdam was of the greatest importance for the Dual Monarchy and for the Slav peoples in it. Were Germany to be given the predominant part in the Bagdad Railway she would, thanks to her overwhelming influence at Constantinople, be in a position to make her "Drang nach Osten" felt more than ever. Germany's trade must meet with no barrier between Oderberg and Constantinople, and she would be obliged to use all her efforts to prevent the Monarchy from opposing any obstacle to her Eastward march. Austria had no reason to pursue an aggressive policy in the Balkans; such a policy was desired neither by the Germans nor by the Slavs in the Empire. Her unfortunate policy there had resulted in her being almost completely supplanted by German commerce, and the danger for Austria-Hungary was that she would become a commercial dependency of Germany, as well as a political dependency, which she already was. To prevent that danger was also a matter of vital importance for Russia and the Balkan States. A free Austria would be far less of a menace to Russia than an Austria compelled by Russian policy to expect everything from Berlin.

The serious results of Austria's Bosnian policy were only now becoming apparent. Germany was actually astonished at Austria's ingratitude in opposing the Elbe dues.

The members of the Triple Entente, said Dr. Kramarz, did not show much comprehension of the situation. Russia did not appear to realize the importance of the Flushing question; and in the meantime Germany was making immense strides towards attaining her object of the supremacy of Europe.

The speaker concluded by stating that he was unable to vote for the Foreign Office Budget, as he entirely disapproved of the present policy of submission to Germany, which he regarded as fatal to the interests of the Monarchy.

Count Aehrenthal rose again to reply to this speech and began by an admission that Dr. Kramarz was perfectly right in stating that Germany's recent policy had been extremely successful. He himself could, however, only feel glad that Germany

had been able to profit by the policy of conciliation begun by Austria-Hungary and to place her relations with Russia on a more friendly footing. He was also glad to hear Dr. Kramarz's admission that Austria-Hungary entertained no aggressive aims in the Balkans: that admission was only a repetition of asseverations made by himself and his predecessors. He hoped Dr. Kramarz would cause the Slav Press, especially in Russia and the Balkan States, to understand that Austria's policy was conservative and not expansive.

Austria was, said Count Aehrenthal, in his opinion far from being isolated, but Dr. Kramarz's demand for the complete independence of her foreign policy was an impossible one. No European Power could be completely independent of [*sic*: in] its foreign policy: the system of alliances prevented it. Austria-Hungary was bound to Germany and Italy by mutual conservative interests. "I will, however," said His Excellency, "interpret Dr. Kramarz's words to mean that we, relying on our own strength, will defend our own interests independently. I can assure him that that has ever been my aim and that it will continue to be so so long as I have the honour to remain at my post."

Count Aehrenthal then stated that he did not at present feel obliged to take any side either for or against the very important question of the Bagdad Railway. He wished however to express a doubt as to whether it would be so harmful to Austria's commercial interests as Dr. Kramarz maintained; and to point out that if a connection were made between the Bagdad Railway and the Persian Railways it would mean that Austrian exports to Persia would only pay the Persian duty and not (as they now did) the Russian duty as well. Austria had no reason to obstruct the transit trade which passed eastwards through the Monarchy.

In regard to the Elbe dues Count Aehrenthal stated that he could only reiterate the official declarations already made: the Austro-Hungarian Government were compelled to maintain their views on this question.

In reply to a question from another deputy in regard to the disarmament proposals of the President of the United States of America, His Excellency stated that he had received the communication with the greatest interest, but he could not be blind to the fact that such an initiative could scarcely attain an immediate success at a time when a state of armed peace was generally regarded as the surest weapon against the outbreak of war. Such a proposal would appear to be only feasible if all the Powers concerned were in agreement with it. Count Aehrenthal had therefore enquired from the other Governments as to the answers which they had returned to the proposal—a step which he had been all the more willing to take as he considered that all attempts to bring about a decrease in the ever-growing burden of armaments were deserving of general sympathy.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

No. 212.

Sir E. Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Cartwright,

Foreign Office, February 3, 1911.

I have been thinking over your interesting letters from Vienna.

It is difficult for us to concert beforehand any plan of action in the event of trouble in the Balkans. If trouble arises because of the misconduct of the Turks in Macedonia, there will be the same wave of feeling in favour of Bulgaria that there was years ago, and it will be impossible for us to side with any thing which is designed to repress Bulgaria. Any thing like Disraeli's policy of 35 years ago would be impossible now.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS, Vol. 2.]

I am quite convinced that we ought to wish d'Aehrenthal to remain, and I trust that he will not be upset.

I have spoken in a quite friendly way to Mensdorff about our relations with Austria: treating the Bosnian cloud as having entirely disappeared,—as indeed it has. The other day, I told Mensdorff that, as France had come to an understanding with Germany about Morocco, and as we had all recognised the annexation of Bosnia, I did not see why there should be any apprehension of difficulty between European Great Powers. There were separate groups amongst them, but no reason remained why these groups should be hostile to each other.

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

No. 213.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Budapest, February 19, 1911.

F.O. 6083/6083/11/44.

D. 5 P.M.

Tel. (No. 12.) Most Confidential.

R. 6.30 P.M.

Yesterday Count Aehrenthal saw a certain person and had a conversation with him which was intended to be reported to me and to French Ambassador.

Count Aehrenthal's chief observations were as follows:—

He had throughout given to Young Turk régime his moral support, but mistakes they had made were so numerous that, in his opinion, they had lost the game, and he intimated that their end was near. He wanted to see strong Government established at Constantinople, and his hopes centred on Mahmoud Shefket. Rumour had reached him that Young Turk Committee were meditating removal of Mahmoud Shefket, but he understood that the latter was quite aware of this and would take care of himself.

Count Aehrenthal said that, crisis being inevitable, the sooner it came the better. Peace of Europe was, in his opinion, threatened not so much from small Balkan States as from anarchy at Constantinople. Under the circumstances he saw prospect of saving the situation only in especially strong military dictatorship. He recognised that atrocities had been perpetrated in Albania and Macedonia, but he hoped that Balkan Committee would not begin an agitation on this subject, and would not get ear of British Foreign Office, and so make His Majesty's Government initiate an active policy against Turkish Government, which might complicate situation. Count Aehrenthal refused to discuss Albanian question.

He was likewise silent regarding Potsdam interview.

As regards Bagdad Railway, Count Aehrenthal said this was like Crete—a question which Austria would not touch. He blamed, however, tendency shown in some quarters to give exaggerated political importance to a question which ought to be a purely economic one, and he hoped it would be settled amicably by interested parties amongst themselves.

MINUTES.

(Para. 4. According to Mr. Noel Buxton's letter to the "Times" of last week⁽²⁾ the Balkan Committee are not at all disposed to begin an agitation, but rather appear prepared to back up the present régime.)

The motives of Count Aehrenthal in making this communication are most obscure—perhaps it is only an appeal to the Balkan Committee and other Macedonian sympathisers to be quiet:

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Constantinople as No. 44 of February 20, and Sir G. Lowther was asked for his observations in the accompanying telegram No. 45. *cp. infra*, p. 255, No. 216.]

⁽²⁾ [The Times, February 15, 1911, p. 6.]

and it would have been more useful if he had given his reasons for supposing that a military dictatorship—usually associated with a policy of adventure—would be conducive to the peace of Europe.

We are really extraordinarily in the dark as to what is going on in Turkey—and we know nothing as to the real character of Mahmoud Sheiket—whether he is really a sufficiently strong man to carry on a dictatorship and what the Committee would gain by his removal.

J. D. G.

20:11 '11

Q[ue]ry. Repeat to Sir G. Lowther and Tel[egraph] to him Sir F. Cartwright's Tel[egram] No. 12. Please send your observations

R. P. M.

The present situation is bad for British interests. A military dictatorship would probably be worse. It is impossible to say what would happen if the Turkish Empire were to break up and if things are as bad as Sir F. Cartwright's informant indicates, this eventuality should be considered and our action determined upon. The questions of Egypt the Persian Gulf and Crete would require consideration.

L. M.

I do not think that a warning to Mr. Buxton is necessary.

We should repeat this tel. to Sir G. Lowther and ask for his views.⁽³⁾

A N
C G.

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 253, note ⁽¹⁾]

No. 214.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir G. Lowther.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Lowther,

Foreign Office, February 20, 1911.

Many thanks for your letter of the 15th.⁽²⁾

I was rather surprised to receive yesterday Cartwright's telegram Number 12,⁽³⁾ which I propose shall be repeated to you for your information, and to give you an opportunity of expressing your views on the subject.⁽⁴⁾ As Aehrenthal is not a man who is disposed to exaggerate, I am a little perturbed that he should view the immediate future at Constantinople with such apprehension. He need have no fear that either we or the Balkan Committee intend to demonstrate in any way against the Turkish Government in regard to what has occurred during the disarmament of the Christian population in Macedonia. The Turkish Ambassador has spoken twice to me in regard to the remarks which were made, both by Lord Lansdowne and Lord Crewe, in the House of Lords on the subject, and he indirectly intimated that it would be pleasing to his Government if an opportunity were taken by Grey to announce that he did not consider that the Turkish Government themselves were in any way implicated in the misdeeds, which undoubtedly were perpetrated by the local officials. I told him that the reports which we had received left little doubt that the local officials had at any rate acted with extreme harshness in many cases and that, if it were true that the Turkish Government contemplated the despatch of a commission of enquiry to the spot, I trusted that the investigation would be thorough and impartial, and that those who were found guilty of misdeeds and arbitrary acts would be severely punished. If this were done, it might then be possible for some occasion to be taken advantage of to express the satisfaction of His Majesty's Government with the course which the Porte had pursued, but I stated that we must await the results of any enquiry commission. I added that we had not made, and did not intend to make, any representations to the Porte on the subject but, as he had mentioned the matter to me, I thought it as well to give him our views on the question. . . .⁽⁵⁾

[Yours ever,

A. NICOLSON.]

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. I of 1911.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It refers to the Bagdad Railway and to comments on the Macedonian question in the Vienna press.]

⁽³⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

⁽⁴⁾ [v. *infra*, pp. 255-6, No. 216.]

⁽⁵⁾ [The omitted parts of this letter refer to the Bagdad Railway, the Albanian revolt, and the Salonica Bank.]

No. 215.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.

F.O. 6649/8720/11/44.

(No. 26.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 20, 1911.

The Italian Ambassador told me to-day that he was desired by the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs to inform me confidentially that, during the visit of the King of Servia to Italy, the King of Servia and M. Milovanovitch had expressed the wish of the Servians to remain quiet, and to see peace and the "status quo" maintained. They were, however, apprehensive that Montenegro might make disturbances, and if so they hoped Russia would exercise a moderating influence. They were also anxious to see the Danube-Adriatic railway pushed forward.

I asked the Ambassador to thank the Marquis di San Giuliano for this information, which I would bear in mind as occasion arose. I told him that the Servians had asked for our support at Constantinople in connection with the railway. We had replied that we were quite favourable to the project, but there were other nations obviously so much more directly interested in the railway than we could be, that we could hardly take the initiative at Constantinople.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 216.

*Sir G. Lowther to Sir Eduard Grey.⁽¹⁾**Pera, February 21, 1911.*

F.O. 6656/6083/11/44.

Tel. (No. 44.)

D. 4.30 P.M.

R. 11.30 P.M.

Your tels. Nos. 44 and 45.⁽²⁾

The struggle between the Salonica element and what may be termed moderates which form subject of my despatch No. 800 of Nov. 2, 1910⁽³⁾ has been silently working since then and has partly come to a head by the resignation of Minister of Interior and ensuing Cabinet crisis which is still unsolved. The Moderates appreciating danger of a direct conflict with violent and revolutionary Salonica element have for some time been contemplating the necessity of allowing the military represented by Mahmoud Shevket to eliminate the extremists their idea being that an overtly military régime might last three to six months and then give way to a moderate civilian Cabinet.

If the political situation develops on the above lines there does not appear to be any reason for anticipating a state of anarchy such as Count Aehrenthal seems to fear.

It is true that Mahmoud Shevket has like others been threatened.

Though advantage of an overtly military régime might be interpreted as favourable to Austro-German influence Press indicates that German circles here are somewhat disquieted at present trend of events leading to formation of a Cabinet by Shevket supported by moderate civilian element as mentioned in my above-mentioned despatch.

Minister of Finance, the present Minister of Interior, Hussein Jahid and Ismaïl Hakki of the Tanin etc. are credited with design of attempting to form a ministry of new men, as far as civilian members are concerned, and excluding men like the present Grand Vizier and M.F.A. and all who have had any old régime experience.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Vienna (as No. 2) on February 28.]

⁽²⁾ [Telegram No. 44 to Sir G. Lowther repeated telegram No. 12 from Sir F. Cartwright, v. *supra*, pp. 253-4, No. 213, and *note* ⁽¹⁾, and telegram No. 45 asked for his observations on it. (F.O. 6083/6083/11/44.)]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced. It deals with internal politics and the Press in Turkey. (F.O. 371/1017. 40442/40442/10/44.)]

MINUTES.

The situation is confused—and the data for judging are insufficient and in some measure conflicting—I think we should repeat this tel. No. 44 to Sir F. Cartwright for his information and which he could utilise in any convers[atio]n he may have with C[oun]t Achrenthal. It would be more prudent to abstain ourselves from expressing any opinions or making any forecasts.

Repeat Sir G. Lowther's tel. No. 44 to Sir F. Cartwright and add—The above is sent to you for your own information only.

A. N.

I am rather afraid of being drawn into a discussion à deux with Achrenthal about Turkish affairs. It will be safer therefore to repeat this telegram to Sir F. Cartwright for his own information only.

E. G

No. 217.

Mr C. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 8068/14/11/44.

(No. 12.) Confidential.

Belgrade, D. February 28, 1911.

Sir,

R. March 6, 1911.

In my despatch no. 10 of the 2nd instant⁽¹⁾ I had the honour to report a certain uneasiness here produced by a statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at a meeting of the United Radical Clubs, to the effect that the situation was anything but clear and that at any moment unexpected and serious events might occur. The direct cause of this uneasiness however is to be traced to the *entente* reported to have been arrived at between Russia and Germany at Potsdam. Every time Russia draws nearer to Austria-Hungary or Germany Servians begin to fear the worst. A united policy of the three Emperors in the Balkans is their bugbear; they at once jump to the conclusion that their interests are made the object of barter between the Emperors.

A glance at the present political relations between Serbia and her neighbours in the Balkans explains the despondency to which Servians seem of late to have given way. Bulgaria continues to treat Serbia as a negligible quantity with whom any arrangement is considered worthless; Greece has thrown in her lot with Bulgaria; Montenegro has, by the fact of its creation into a second independent Serb Kingdom and owing to the mutual personal jealousies of King Peter and King Nicholas, become still further estranged from Serbia; with Turkey alone there exists a semblance of cordiality which is however dictated by stern necessity only (keeping the door open for the transit of war material) and which is fundamentally antagonistic to Serbia's aspirations in Macedonia. No wonder then that Servians should view with anxiety their present position in case of a conflict in the Balkans, when they see that they have no friends amongst their immediate neighbours and that the only semblance of one is precisely their hereditary enemy. Serbia's isolation has provoked a number of questions in the Skuptchina as to what steps the Government have taken to safeguard the interests of the country in case of complications, but no replies have been vouchsafed to these interpellations.

M. Milovanovitch, whom I questioned upon his return from Rome, as to the likelihood of there being a breach of the peace in the Balkans this spring, told me he thought that the real danger-point lay in Montenegro, where he feared King Nicholas might be tempted to take advantage of the discontent of the Albanians and of the difficulties of Turkey in the Yemen to launch forth into some foolhardy enterprise. His Majesty was a very ambitious man, his assumption of the Royal Crown had whetted his appetite, and he might well wish to close his reign by an "action d'éclat." If, His Excellency went on, the Powers would only be firm with

(1) [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 4254/868/11/89).]

King Nicholas and especially Russia who had the advantage of holding his purse strings, he thought that the danger might be averted. He added that the Servian Government were urging St. Petersburg to adopt a stern attitude at Cetinje and he had been glad to find, when at Rome, that the Italian Government were ready to lend their co-operation.

M. Spalaikovitch yesterday told me that the Servian Government had a few days ago instructed their Minister at Cetinje to point out to King Nicholas the great dangers that would attend any disturbance in the Balkans. That Count Aehrenthal had only recently declared in the Delegations that the policy of Austria-Hungary was the maintenance of the *status quo* but that, if Montenegro was so ill-advised as to break the peace, His Excellency would no longer feel himself bound by his declarations and the reoccupation of the Sanjak would probably follow. The Italian Minister here had informed the Servian Government on the 25th instant that his Government had sent telegraphic instructions to their representative at St. Petersburg to urge upon the Russian Government the necessity of applying strong pressure at Cetinje. M. Spalaikovitch took the opportunity to deplore the fact that there was no British Minister accredited to Montenegro. But, on the whole, M. Spalaikovitch was more hopeful than before as to the prospects of a peaceful spring provided that Russia took such energetic steps as her privileged position at Cetinje enabled her to render effective.

I should add that neither M. Milovanovitch nor M. Spalaikovitch confirmed the statement made by the Servian Minister in Paris to M. Pichon (see Sir F. Bertie's despatch No. 52 of the 27th January),⁽²⁾ that the Servian Government had come to the conclusion that the money for the agitation promoted from Montenegro was being furnished by King Ferdinand. Although I tentatively suggested that money might be coming from Bulgaria or even from Italy as well as from Austria, they both persisted in the view reported in my despatch No. 86 of the 16th December last,⁽³⁾ that the money was being provided by Austria.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above (F.O. 3029/14/11/44).]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 232, No. 201.]

No. 218.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Vienna, March 7, 1911.

F.O. 8466/6083/11/44.

D. 8-10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 15.)

R. 10-30 P.M.

I have just seen Count von Aehrenthal, who seemed far from well, having returned from Budapest with a bad chill. He expects to leave Vienna for the seaside on Friday.

Austrian Ambassador at Constantinople arrived last night, and is ready to take charge of Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

From a long conversation which I had with Count Aehrenthal this afternoon I gathered that he is somewhat anxious as to the situation at Constantinople, but that he hopes that with good luck matters will arrange themselves there without a breach of peace.

He would not express any views with regard to possibility of a military dictatorship, neither would he say whether he hoped for this. He had always counselled moderation at Constantinople, and would continue to do so whenever favourable

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent by post to Constantinople (as No. 6); to Sofia (as No. 5).]

moment should present itself. He intimated that he had advised Turks to do their best to induce Albanian refugees to return to their homes, and had advised King of Montenegro to use his influence in the same direction.

King of Bulgaria had an hour's interview with Emperor on Sunday. They had not met for over two years. Count von Aehrenthal assured me that interview had been arranged without his knowledge while he was at Budapest, and that he had never run after the King of Bulgaria; he thought that it was quite useless to do so. Russia having recently damped Bulgarian ambitions of aggrandisement. King thought it advisable to improve his relations with Austria-Hungary. Count von Aehrenthal declared that Emperor told him yesterday that he was very satisfied with interview with King, and that he was convinced that latter's intentions were pacific, at least for the immediate future.

Count von Aehrenthal expressed great satisfaction at your latest declaration as to Turkey in House of Commons,⁽²⁾ and he thought that they would correct unfavourable effect produced in Turkey by the speech of Secretary of State for India.⁽³⁾

Count von Aehrenthal closed his conversation by stating that he thought all the Powers were desirous of maintaining the *status quo* in the Near East, and he was glad to note that they all seemed determined to abstain from doing anything which could be interpreted as a blow dealt at the present Turkish régime. For him maintenance of strong Government at Constantinople was essential to maintenance of peace in the Balkans.

⁽²⁾ [Parl. Deb., 5th Ser., (House of Commons), Vol. 22, pp. 180-1]

⁽³⁾ [Parl. Deb., 5th Ser., (House of Lords), Vol. 7, p. 36.]

CHAPTER LXXIV. THE TRIPOLI WAR.

I.—BEFORE THE ULTIMATUM. FEBRUARY 1910-SEPTEMBER 28, 1911.

[*ED. NOTE*—The following extract from the Annual Report on Italy for the Year 1911 (sent as an enclosure in Sir R. Rodd's despatch No. 38, D February 10, R February 12, 1912 (F O. 6027/6027/12, '22)) gives an account of the relations between Italy and Turkey in the period preceding the declaration of war. For this period *cp. G.P. XXX, I, pp. 3-73, Chapter 232.* The Tripoli question in its later stages is treated in detail in the remainder of the volume and in *G.P. XXX, II, pp. 75-593, Chapters 233-40.*

Italy and Turkey; the Antecedents of the Expedition to Tripoli.

7. The relations of Italy with Turkey have not been cordial for a number of years. The Turks, long familiar with the type which is represented in the numerous Italian colonies in the Levant, have not regarded them nor their country with any special respect. The promotion of Italy to equal rank with the Great Powers occurred at a comparatively recent date in history, and Italy has no doubt had some cause to feel that she has not been treated by the Porte with the consideration which a Great Power expects to receive, and to which the elder states had established their title. The extreme sensitiveness of the younger nations in this respect, and their readiness to detect affront should be borne in mind in estimating the demeanour they have adopted towards Turkey. At the same time it must be admitted that the attitude of Italy has been such as to arouse the suspicion of a Power whose history has been for a century one of gradual and constant territorial dismemberment. Apart from the Italian appropriation of a portion of the Red Sea coast, over which Turkey could hardly have pretended to more than a very shadowy overlordship, her pretensions to a reversion of Tripoli have never been concealed. She was known to have contracted for a free hand there in certain contingencies with another Power, and any questions which have from time to time arisen regarding the hinterland of Tripoli have invariably led to interpellations and discussions in the Italian Chamber, which appeared to presume that some acquired right of Italy was being infringed. Among the more ignorant of the population in Italy, Tripoli has, in fact, in so far as it was known at all, been regarded as already a dependency of the Kingdom. It was, therefore, not to be wondered at that the Turkish administration was disposed to regard with mistrust any Italian initiative or enterprise in a province of the Empire so clearly indicated as an Italian sphere of interest. At the same time a sounder political instinct would have suggested to the Porte the opportuneness of avoiding all acts of provocation there, inasmuch as without the disposal of sea power Turkey could hardly hope to repel an aggression, which she might have staved off indefinitely by allowing peaceful penetration. The cultivation of friendly relations with Italy, moreover, would have seemed a sufficiently obvious policy to adopt, seeing that the two countries have a common interest in preserving the status quo on the eastern side of the Adriatic, which both of them believe to be menaced.

8. In the latter days of the ex-Sultan Abdul Hamid a long series of troublesome episodes culminated in a refusal to sanction the opening of certain post offices in the Empire. Such a refusal would not, it was felt in Italy, have been addressed to any other Great Power, and the fleet was ordered to Turkish waters, with the immediate result that satisfactory assurances were forthcoming.

9. The revolution in Turkey seemed to afford a good opportunity for a rapprochement, and during the first few months of the new régime it had all the sympathy of Italy, and an Italo-Turkish Association was formed for the promotion of commercial exchanges. A comparatively short period, however, sufficed to show that the constitutional administration was even less tractable than the autocratic government of Abdul Hamid. Nevertheless, in February, 1910, the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Guicciardini, replied to an interpellation in the Chamber of Deputies on the subject of the protection of Italian interests in Tripoli with a declaration which, it was hoped, would restore relations of confidence. He stated that respect for the integrity of the Ottoman Empire in Africa, as elsewhere, had always been a principle of Italian foreign policy, and that the Ottoman provinces in North Africa were a factor of great importance for the preservation of the balance of Power in the Mediterranean. It was now more than ever secure as, apart from specific treaties, the new régime would tolerate no infringement of Ottoman rights. The integrity of the Ottoman provinces in Africa was unquestioned and outside discussion. Within a period of two years from the date at which these declarations were made Italy, under another Government, it is true, has occupied these provinces and announced their annexation

to the Crown by Royal Decree. The circumstances which led to this change of front must now be considered.

10. The temperament of Hakki Pasha and the opinions which he seemed to have formed during his occupation of the Turkish Embassy at Rome as to the efficiency of Italian administration, did not augur well for any improvement of relations when he was recalled to become Grand Vizier. His successor was conciliatory in form, but apparently without much influence. Throughout 1910 and the early months of 1911, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to complain of their chronic difficulties with the Porte. In Tripoli it was maintained that, while concessions and facilities were readily extended to the subjects of any other country, every Italian undertaking was consistently impeded, and that pressure was locally exercised on the Arabs to prevent them from having any dealings with Italian firms. The large capital investments of the Banco di Roma in property and industrial enterprises were prevented from becoming remunerative. The columns of the press, and especially of the Opposition organs, were filled with complaints of the vexations to which Italians were subjected. Of any three of them, the Minister for Foreign Affairs observed that it might generally be said that one was non-existent, one was overstated and the third was true. Certain specific incidents in other parts of the Turkish Empire, which it would occupy too much space to record in full, occupied much public attention, and the Ministry—successive Ministries—were continually attacked for weakness in dealing with a situation which was becoming intolerable. The Government was perplexed as to what action to take to terminate the situation. In the days of Abdul Hamid a naval demonstration would generally suffice, but the Young Turks had invented a new weapon in the boycott, and any menace of strong measures was sure to be followed by its immediate enforcement, which would have produced a dangerous situation. In Tripoli itself, the presence of a truculent Vali and an excitable and perhaps provocative Italian Consul-General, resulted in a condition of extreme tension, and rumours began to be circulated of danger to the Italian colony. While, however, making every allowance for the exasperation of Italy, it was not possible in the early months of 1911 to regard the situation as one which would justify or lead up to war. The efforts of the Italian Government to prevent Albanian agitators from conveying arms across the Adriatic and holding meetings in Italy should, it was considered here, have been appreciated by the Turkish Government, and, indeed, some indication of a more conciliatory spirit seemed to be afforded by the recall of the Vali of Tripoli, which was followed by the departure of the Italian Consul-General on leave. On the 2nd July, the Turkish Herr-Apparent, Prince Yussuf Izzedin, paid a visit to Rome on his homeward journey after attending the coronation festivities in London. No special significance was attached to his visit, which, however, seemed to corroborate the presumption of a more friendly disposition.

11. Such was the situation in the early part of the summer. The crisis in the Morocco question and the despatch of a German warship to the port of Agadir synchronized with the first symptoms of a change in the official outlook. On the 3rd July the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in discussing Near Eastern affairs with His Majesty's Ambassador, observed, that if there should, in the early future, be any occasion for the Powers to exercise pressure on Turkey (to secure a settlement in Albania), Italy would welcome the opportunity to make a demonstration in Tripoli which would secure to the Italians there some immunity from the vexations to which they were subject. By the end of that month it had become fairly evident that there must either be a definite rupture between France and Germany, or that France would, through the negotiations in progress, make good her protectorate over Morocco. On the 31st July the Marquis di San Giuliano, in reply to an enquiry whether a change of the Italian Ambassador at Constantinople indicated any change of policy, said that a year or two ago the Tripoli question practically did not exist, and that with the advent of the new régime it was regarded as finally disposed of. It had, however, been called into being once more by the policy pursued towards Italy by the Young Turkish party, and should France extend her dominion over North Africa by acquiring the protectorate of Morocco, the balance of power in the Mediterranean would be affected and public opinion here would be so greatly moved, that it might be difficult to resist the pressure for action in Tripoli.

12. As time went on, the question of the compensation of Italy for any extension of French dominions in North Africa began to be mooted with insistence in the opposition and independent press. The semi-official organs not only remained discreetly silent, but even as late as September communications, apparently of an official character, deprecated the chauvinism of those who demanded action. It is especially difficult in this country to appreciate how far what is referred to as public opinion is spontaneous, and how far its expression is the result of stimulants. The more so, inasmuch as there are few newspapers in Italy which could continue to exist if they were not subventioned and supported by various interests, and the cost is not excessive. Many influences were at the time engaged in carrying on an active propaganda in favour of direct action in Tripoli, at a moment which had much to recommend it as opportune. Sicily and the south of Italy, which furnish the majority of the Italian colony there, and look to the north African coast as the nearest foreign market for their vegetable produce, were unanimously favourable, and even the Socialist representatives of the south urged the plea of the advantages which would accrue to labour. The present Government is strong in southerners, and both the Minister and Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs are Sicilians. The Banco di Roma, pre-eminently the clerical bank which administers the finances of the Vatican, and is directed

by Signor Romolo Tittoni, a cousin of the present Ambassador in Paris and former Minister for Foreign Affairs, was deeply involved in Tripolitan enterprises, which could only fructify under changed conditions, and its influence was sufficient to ensure the support of the clerical party. That the Banco di Roma has played an important part in influencing the press no one for a moment doubts. The policy of the Opposition had been for some time past chiefly directed to attacking the Government for the weakness of its attitude towards Turkey, and the organs of the party carried on a very active press campaign on behalf of direct intervention. It must, however, be admitted that the independent papers were also favourable. The semi-official organs maintained a discreet reserve. The Socialist press was alone unfavourable, although it soon became apparent that there were divisions even in that group.

13. Up to and after the beginning of September the President of the Council was believed to be against any policy of adventure, though he had admitted that public opinion might force his hand. The Crown was undoubtedly unfavourable. The Prime Minister, who is the most adroit of parliamentarians, and almost exclusively interested in internal politics, no doubt weighed carefully the influence of the forces which were manifesting themselves on the side of action. A new group which had come into being among his own partisans were giving signs of a tendency to revolt, for which they might make the Tripoli question a pretext if the Government failed to turn what seemed a favourable opportunity to account. The Opposition had openly declared themselves, and the small clerical group, the members of which are distributed among the various parties, was known to be favourable. If he listened to the advice of his Sicilian colleagues the vast majority of the Chamber would be on his side, and he could afford to disregard the section of the Extreme Left, which was constitutionally bound to oppose any aggressive measures.

14. By the middle of September the voice of the press had become unanimous for action, with the exception of that of the Socialist and Radical organs, which was halting and negative. The Minister for Foreign Affairs declined to accede to the request of the Turkish Chargé d'Affaires that the Government should issue a communication dissociating themselves from the press campaign. After the actual crisis had taken place he explained that it would have been open to Italy at this time to have adopted some less drastic measure before having recourse to extreme action, and thus to have justified herself with European opinion. But the only result would have been to delay the inevitable for a short time. The immediate consequence of any attempt to exercise pressure upon Turkey in order to obtain more reasonable treatment for Italians in Tripoli would have been a declaration of the boycott, and in view of the temper of the country this would have produced a sense of exasperation which would have led to war. The longer it was deferred the less favourable the local conditions would become, the Turks would have been enabled to prepare for the defence of Tripoli, and the winter sea would render the coast difficult of approach. The danger of a rising in the Balkans, for which hostilities between Italy and Turkey might afford an opportunity, would be minimized if the crisis occurred in the autumn, and would be greatly aggravated if it were postponed till the spring.

15. The Italian attitude may thus be summed up. A long series of incidents and a long period of strained relations with Turkey had produced a situation, the continuance of which was regarded as inconsistent with the national dignity. France was extending her North African dominion over Morocco, and greatly increasing her influence as a Mediterranean Power. The only available means of restoring the Mediterranean equilibrium, as far as Italy was concerned, lay in the occupation of Tripoli, which thus became a political necessity, at a moment when the conditions were not unfavourable to success, and when the step could be taken with a minimum risk of compromising the general situation. Another argument for action, to which too much weight need not be attached, which the Prime Minister however put forward on several occasions, and which seems to have been used when the issue was submitted to the Sovereign, was the danger of some other Power—and Germany was specifically mentioned—making arrangements with Turkey by which the port of Tripoli might be occupied, and the prospect of Italy's coveted reversion would be for ever extinguished.

16. It has been generally assumed that a *coup de main* in Tripoli had long been premeditated and carefully prepared; and the rapidity of mobilization might seem to justify the assumption. That an expedition might some day be called for without much previous notice had no doubt always been anticipated by the naval and military authorities. But there is not much reason to believe that when it actually took place, these authorities had received any very long notice. The Minister for Foreign Affairs categorically stated that up to a very brief period before the despatch of the ultimatum only the Prime Minister and himself were aware of the imminence of war. On the night of the 26th September, the terms of an ultimatum to be handed into the Porte were telegraphed to the Italian Chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople. This ultimatum, which was presented on the 28th, drew attention to the condition of neglect and disorder to which Tripoli and Cyrenaica had been abandoned; owing to geographical proximity order and progressive government there were a vital interest to Italy; in spite of the support which the Italian Government had always given to the Ottoman Government, both of old and recently, every Italian enterprise in Tripoli had consistently encountered a determined and unjustifiable opposition. At the eleventh hour the Ottoman Government had declared themselves ready to discuss such economic concessions as did not conflict with the dignity and higher interests of Turkey: but experience had established the uselessness of such negotiations; reports from Italian Consular agents showed that

a dangerous agitation against Italians had been deliberately fomented in Tripoli, involving danger also to the subjects of other nations. The despatch of Ottoman transports would only further aggravate the danger of the situation. Under the circumstances, the Italian Government found themselves compelled to defend their dignity and interests by a military occupation of Tripoli and Cyrenaica, and they requested the Imperial Government to give the necessary orders to preclude any opposition, the ensuing situation being left for subsequent settlement between the two Governments. A reply was demanded within twenty-four hours from the presentation of the ultimatum, failing which the Italian Government would be compelled to adopt the measures necessary to make the occupation effective.

17. Simultaneously, a telegram was delivered to the representatives of Italy at Athens, Belgrade, Cetinje, Sofia and Bucarest, as well as to the Consulates in European Turkey, informing them that the Italian Government, for reasons specified, had been obliged to take measures for the protection of their interests and dignity in Tripoli, which might lead to a conflict with Turkey. Whatever the outcome might be, the policy of Italy was still, as always, the maintenance of the territorial *status quo* in the Balkan Peninsula and the consolidation of European Turkey. They must, therefore, not only refrain from encouraging any anti-Turkish movements in the Balkans, but make every effort to prevent any vain hopes or illusions being formed in consequence of this action. The reply of the Porte to the ultimatum, which was received on the 29th, being unfavourable, a declaration of war was immediately issued. The state of hostilities was regarded as having begun at 2.30 p.m. on that day. The Italian fleet was already concentrating in Tripoli waters, and a squadron of destroyers left Brindisi to watch the Albanian coast.]

No. 219.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/916.

5704/5704/10/22.

(No. 20.)

Sir,

Rome, D. February 15, 1910.

R. February 18, 1910.

I have the honour to report that in the course of yesterday's sitting in the Chamber of Deputies a question was asked as to the intentions of the Government with regard to the protection of Italian interests in the Tripolitan hinterland.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs in his reply stated that the Ottoman provinces in Northern Africa were a factor of the greatest importance in the preservation of the balance of power in the Mediterranean and that therefore respect for the integrity of the Ottoman Empire in Africa as elsewhere had always been a principle of Italian foreign policy. He was able to assure his interpellator that the integrity of the Ottoman provinces in Africa had never been more secure than now. Guaranteed, as it was, by general and special Treaties it now enjoyed the additional guarantee afforded by the new régime in Turkey which would tolerate no infringements of Ottoman rights in Africa. It was now a pacific feature of the situation that both the oases of Gadames and of Ghat on the western frontier and the Gulf of Selun and the oasis of Kufra on the eastern frontier belonged to the Ottoman Empire. There was therefore no doubt that Tripoli, the Cirenaica and Fezzan within their actual boundaries, were secure from any alteration in their present situation.

It was possible that his interpellator was alluding to the recent changes which had occurred in the territory between the borders of Fezzan, the Egyptian frontier and Lake Chad. It was true, he said, that important events took place in that district last summer. The French defeated the Sultan of Wadai, took Abescer and occupied practically the whole of Wadai from the Egyptian frontier to the frontier of Fezzan: but the territorial modifications involved were the result of the Anglo-French agreement of 1899 and of the tacit consent of the Porte, and whatever view one may take of them, are the final consequences of facts which came to a head eleven years ago and which were fully discussed by Parliament at the time.

What is of importance at the present time is that the integrity of the Ottoman provinces of Africa within their actually recognised frontiers, is unquestioned and outside all discussion.

Count Guicciardini's reply is of considerable importance as indicating that Italy has perceived the hopelessness of realizing under present conditions her long-cherished territorial aspirations in Tripoli. It affords moreover a convincing proof of her genuine desire to support the new régime in Turkey.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

MINUTE.

An important declaration

E. A. C.
W. L.
C. H.
E. G.

No. 220.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 1496/250/11/44.

(No. 191.)

Sir,

Rome, D. December 31, 1910.

R. January 14, 1911.

In my immediately preceding despatch⁽¹⁾ I have referred to the irritation manifested in this country at the attitude which has for some time past been observed by the Turkish Government towards Italy. While the lack of cordiality which has arisen in their mutual relations does not seem likely to lead to any very serious consequences, it will undoubtedly tend to make the Italian Government less ready to give satisfaction to Turkish representations in such issues as those which the situation in Crete is liable at any moment to call forth. The Italians consider that the official announcements which have more than once been publicly made to the effect that their policy is the maintenance of the status quo in the East and one of sympathy to the new régime, should have sufficed to eliminate any apprehensions which may have been aroused in the past among Ottomans as to Italian designs in Tripoli, and they resent the continued opposition of the Turkish Government to any Italian enterprise in a province of the Empire in which so many of their countrymen are established, while the facilities which they seek in vain are readily accorded to their rivals and competitors.

The seizure at Midi, in the Red Sea,⁽²⁾ of a dhow from Massowah sailing under the Italian flag has aroused considerable indignation, as the Italians are persuaded that the Turkish Authorities would have hesitated to treat the flag of any other of the Great Powers in a similar fashion. This irritation was not diminished by a proposal from the Porte that the question of right should be submitted to arbitration at the Hague. The matter is complicated, I gather from the Secretary General, by the fact that the Turkish Government have consistently declined to recognise the Italian occupation of Massowah, and therefore incidentally, it seems, do not recognise the right of Massowah dhows to the Italian flag, while no opportunity is lost of trying to establish precedents for the falling into abeyance of the Capitulations. The question of contraband, which has been alleged by the Turkish Authorities, still remains to be proved. It appears, however, that this matter is now in a fair way to be settled by the despatch of joint commissioners to investigate the issue on the spot.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It is despatch No. 190 of December 31, 1910 (F.O. 459/459/11/22), and mentions the growing unpopularity of Signor Luzzatti's Government at Rome. One of the reasons described was a growing resentment with the administration of the new régime in Turkey, which was said to have acted on many occasions in a manner prejudicial to Italian interests.]

⁽²⁾ [This incident was reported by Mr. Marling, in his despatch No. 901 of December 14, 1910 (F.O. 871/1017. 45685/45518/10/44). The dhow was charged with smuggling and seized by a Turkish revenue steamboat. The Italian Consul-General, however, intervened, and an Italian man-of-war took possession of the dhow.]

The Secretary General observed that, however dissatisfied the Italian Government might be with the attitude of the present Administration in Turkey, they felt obliged to temporize, and could not give practical effect to their resentment. They had appreciated the fact that Turkey had learned the use of modern political weapons and they had seen the disastrous effects on commerce of the boycott organised first against Austria and subsequently against Greece. They could not afford to risk the material losses which a stronger attitude might entail, but he gave me to understand that until a more conciliatory disposition was manifested at Constantinople, the Turkish Government must not expect much regard for Ottoman susceptibilities from Italy.

The part which Italy is thus compelled to play is reacting on the position of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who here, as so often in the relations of Italy with Austria, has to pay with his person for the unpopularity of a policy which every one knows in reality to be inevitable.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

MINUTE.

We are not the only losers by the new régime.

L. M.
A. N.
E. G.

No. 221.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.

F.O. 29707/29707/11/44.

(No. 119.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 28, 1911.

The Italian Ambassador told me on the 26th inst[ant] that the Marquis di San Giuliano was in a great difficulty as to Tripoli. Italian public opinion was very sensitive and discontented on the subject. The Italians were now to be excluded from tendering for port works. If an Italian tried to buy land in Tripoli, he was unsuccessful; whereas a German could acquire whole tracts quite easily. The Marquis di San Giuliano wished me to be aware of how difficult the situation was becoming, as he might be obliged to take some step.

I said that I desired to sympathise with Italy, in view of the very good relations between us. If it really was the case that Italians were receiving unfair and adverse economic treatment in Tripoli,—a place where such treatment was especially disadvantageous to Italy,—and should the hand of Italy be forced, I would, if need be, express to the Turks the opinion that, in face of the unfair treatment meted [*sic*] out to Italians, the Turkish Government could not expect anything else.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY.]

No. 222.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 30691/30691/11/44.

(No. 117.) Confidential.

Sir,

Rome, D. July 31, 1911.

R. August 4, 1911.

I have the honour to report that I asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs this afternoon whether the departure on leave of the Italian Consul-General in Tripoli of

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this despatch were sent to Constantinople, Madrid, Berlin, and to Paris.]

Barbary, and the simultaneous change of Italian Ambassadors in Constantinople was to be regarded as indicating a definite alteration of Italian policy towards Turkey.

The Marquis di San Giuliano replied that as far as the leave of Commendatore Pestalozza from Tripoli was concerned, the announcement which had been made public, that he had asked for permission to return home because his sister was dying, was perfectly true, in fact, His Excellency said, "*Elle était si bien mourante qu'elle est morte.*" In telegraphing for leave, the Consul-General had stated that if he received no reply he would assume it to be granted. A telegram had been sent to him begging him not to come away at the present moment, as his departure would occasion comment, but the cable had broken down and the message never reached him. Consequently, he assumed he was authorised to go. Whether he would ever return was still an open question. He was most anxious himself not to do so, but it was difficult for the Italian Government to recall him, so long as the present Vali was not removed by the Turkish Government.

As regards the change of Ambassadors in Constantinople, His Excellency said it had been evident to him for some time that Baron Mayor des Planches must be withdrawn. At times his reports and conduct of affairs were all that would be desired, at other times they were quite inadequate. It was possible that his nerve had given way. In any case it had been decided not to retain him any longer at his post, and he was being replaced by an eminent public servant, who enjoyed the entire confidence of the President of the Council. From the explanations thus offered by his Excellency for this somewhat startling withdrawal of an Ambassador who has not yet reached his sixtieth year, I apprehend that the political reasons I have suggested for the change in a recent despatch⁽²⁾ are not very wide of the mark.

As to whether these moves indicate a change of policy, the Marquis went on to say, it was rather difficult for him to reply, because without precisely indicating it, it was unfortunately not altogether impossible that some change of policy might be forced upon the Italian Government. He trusted that would not be the case and his anxiety on this point was fully shared by the President of the Council. But it seemed to be impossible to convince the present régime in Constantinople that there was a limit to what the dignity of the Italian nation would endure in their policy of pin-pricks and in the differential treatment from which the national interests were suffering in Tripoli. A year or two ago the Tripoli question did not exist. It was true that in view of what once appeared to be a remote but not impossible contingency, Italy had secured her position there vis-à-vis of other European Powers, but with the advent of the new order of things in Turkey, the question seemed to have receded from the visible horizon, and had ceased to preoccupy the Italian people. The policy pursued towards their colonists in Tripoli however had created it afresh, and he could not but be anxious lest public opinion should sooner or later force the hand of the Government. The Banca Romana had made large investments in commercial enterprises in Tripoli, and was no doubt to some extent behind the active propaganda which was being carried on in the press of this country in favour of more drastic action. If France established fixity of tenure in Morocco this current of public opinion would acquire such force that it might become difficult to resist the pressure.

I observed that any such action as certain sections of the press of this country appeared to contemplate would involve Italy in immense and obvious difficulties, and that from the character of its population Tripoli constituted a dangerous hornet's nest to disturb. The Marquis di San Giuliano said he was fully conscious of this, and therefore his energies had constantly been directed to smoothing over difficulties and deprecating agitation, while he had done all in his power to induce the Turkish Government to show a little good-will. But the Young Turks were quite intractable. The result was that he was continually attacked in this country for weakness and

(2) [Not reproduced. Sir R. Rodd's despatch No. 113 of July 23, 1911, referred to the change of Ambassadors, and suggested as a possible explanation that the change in personnel was intended to facilitate an improvement in relations with Turkey. (F.O. 29919/29919/11/22.)]

irresolution. Both he and the President of the Council were sincerely anxious to bring about a better state of relations, and he had hoped that friendly advice might be tendered to the Turkish Government in this sense. I gathered that His Excellency was referring here to the German Government who seem at the present moment to be in a more favourable position than any of the others for exercising influence at Constantinople. In this respect, however, it does not appear that his hopes have been realised.

That the question of Tripoli is causing him very serious preoccupation I have no doubt, and in view of what I have recorded in my immediately preceding despatch he is watching with considerable anxiety the result of the negotiations now in progress for a settlement in Morocco.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

MINUTE.

This is the despatch to which Sir R. Rodd referred in his No. 116,⁽³⁾ in connection with the Morocco crisis. The point is that Italy may feel compelled, if other Powers gain special advantages in Morocco, to seek compensation in Tripoli—a dangerous policy.

E. A. C.

Aug[ust] 9.

W L.

(³) [*v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. VII, p. 425, No. 445.]

[*ED NOTE*.—There were several unfortunate incidents causing dispute between Italy and Turkey, including the Guzman episode. The following minute was written by Sir Edward Grey on a despatch from Sir G. Lowther, No. 569 of August 11 (F.O. 32816/30691/11/44), which describes the excitement of the Italian press about the Tripoli incidents. It was received on August 21, and the date of the minute is shortly after this —

MINUTE.

Sir G. Lowther should have a copy of my conversation with the Italian Ambassador about Tripoli. He might in reply to Rifaat say in conversation that we understand the Italian complaint to be that they receive in Tripoli less favourable treatment than other nations.

E. G.

Ultimately the Consul-General of Italy, Commendatore Pestalozza, went "on leave," and the Vali of Tripoli, Ibrahim Pasha, was reported, in Sir R. Rodd's despatch No. 125 of August 17 (F.O. 33825/30691/11/44), to have been recalled and replaced by Bekir Sami Bey.

It is clear from the immediately succeeding document that the conversation to which Sir Edward Grey referred in his minute was that of July 26 (*v. supra*, p. 264, No. 221). There was, however, a further conversation on August 16, which dealt primarily with the question of the sending of mails from Malta to Tripoli. In the course of the discussion Sir Edward Grey said, "It would, I thought, be much better that we should show our good-will to Italy by giving her our diplomatic support in Constantinople if she had occasion to protest against Italian interests being treated by the Turks in Tripoli more unfavourably than those of other Powers" (Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd, No. 93 Commercial, August 16, 1911. (F.O. 371/603. 32717/23313/11/144.))

No. 223.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther

F.O. 32816/30691/11/44.

(No. 238.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 30, 1911.

I have received Your Excellency's despatch No. 569 of the 11th instant⁽¹⁾ reporting your conversations with the Turkish Minister for F[oreign] A[ffairs] and with the Italian Chargé d'Affaires in regard to the unsatisfactory condition of the relations between the Italian and Turkish Governments.

Y[our] E[xcellency] will have read in the "Egypt and Soudan" Confidential Print, July 28, Section 1, a despatch which I addressed to H[is] M[ajesty's]

(¹) [Not reproduced. *v. Ed. note*, immediately preceding.]

Ambassador at Rome recording a conversation which I had had with the Italian Ambassador at this court on the subject of Tripoli.⁽²⁾

In answer to the enquiry which Rifaat [*sic*: Rifaat] Pasha made as to the views of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] in regard to foreign competition for concessions in Tripoli, you might inform H[is] E[xc]ellency, in the course of conversation, that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] understand the complaint of the Italian Gov[ernment] to be that they receive less favourable treatment in Tripoli than other nations.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

(²) [*r. supra*, p. 264, No. 221.]

No. 224.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 35685/30691/11/44.

(No. 138.) Confidential.

Posulpo, D. September 4, 1911.

Sir,

R. September 11, 1911.

In spite of the absorbingly interesting negotiations which are now in process at Berlin and Paris, and of a situation in Europe causing the greatest anxiety to those who are responsible for the direction of international politics, the Italian capital retains its usual deserted summer aspect. Ministers assemble once a month for a Cabinet Council, and then hastily disperse again to baths and mountain stations. The press repeats the various rumours as to the course of negotiations, and the question of the part to be taken by Italy is mooted in telegrams ostensibly originating in France or Germany and contradicted in others dated from Vienna, while editorial observations or semi-official comment are conspicuous by their absence. Everything thus would seem to indicate that the centre of gravity is elsewhere.

It would however be a mistake to assume that this apparent indifference is more than apparent, or that the attitude of Italy does not require careful watching.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs has made no concealment of his view that a modification of the Act of Algieras would restore to Italy full liberty to act as seems best to her in her own interests and he has dropped a significant hint that these interests would be affected by an extension of French influence in the Mediterranean, unless Italy could obtain a compensation, which France is precluded by existing contracts from opposing.⁽¹⁾ Under the circumstances it is perhaps rather significant than otherwise that the chronic press agitation with regard to the grievances of Italians in Tripoli is for the moment somewhat quiescent, and the fact that the Turkish Government has of late shown a disposition to be conciliatory and to eliminate causes of friction suggests an anxiety to avoid affording Italy any pretext for complaint.

In the generally prevailing conditions of suspense and reserve one is compelled to look for such slight indications of tendency as are available, and I cannot but think that the tone of the reply made to the Turkish Embassy on the subject of the latest enquiries regarding Crete, reported in my despatch No. 135 of the 31st ultimo,⁽²⁾ and the disinclination of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to pledge himself to make any communication to Turkey on the subject of the decision to which the Powers may eventually come, points to a desire to keep open for the present an available focus of irritation.

(¹) [This conversation was reported at length in Sir R. Rodd's despatch, No. 105 of July 3, 1911. (F.O. 27882/27882/11/22.) It is not reproduced here, as Sir R. Rodd's impression, derived from certain things said by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, is indicated above. Marginal comment by Mr. Mallet: "There is a Franco-Italian agreement respecting the Mediterranean. —L. M." *cp. supra*, p. 28, No. 24, *min*, and note (²).]

(²) [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 34928/29429/11/13.)]

On one point I feel little doubt, namely that public opinion in Italy, which has long been disposed to criticise the alleged weakness of her foreign policy, would throw over with indignation any Ministry which acquiesced in the practical annexation of a great part of Morocco by France without a struggle to obtain a similar hold upon Tripoli for Italy, and, however reluctant Signor Giolitti may be to embark on an enterprise of the difficulty of which he is fully aware, I do not believe he would be able to resist the pressure which would be brought to bear upon him.

The circumstances which would move this public opinion may not arise, but it is as well that we should be prepared for the eventuality and should make up our minds in time as to what our attitude will be.

For the moment it is interesting to note that the telegrams supplied to the Italian press from Berlin are rather of a nature to encourage her ambitions, and to remind her that the present situation is one which she may turn to favourable account. One organ, the "Hamburger Zeitung," is even quoted as warning Italy that, if she does not wake up and allows Tripoli to fall under the influence of France "and other Powers," she will in the year of her national celebrations be celebrating her own funeral as a nation.

Should the Tripoli question become a material one, there is no doubt that the crucial moment will have arrived in which the definite orientation of Italy will be settled, and that it will depend on the attitude assumed by the Powers towards which group she will permanently gravitate in the future.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

MINUTES.

The French, ourselves and Germany have disinterested themselves in Tripoli already.

There is a Franco-Italian Agreement about the Mediterranean, which was always supposed to have comprised an acknowledgment by Italy of French predominance in Morocco, but we do not know its exact terms.

L. M.

A. N.

The Italian Ambassador in speaking to me always implies that Italy is debarred by her agreement with France from objecting to French action in Morocco; but he contends that when France gets Morocco Italy ought to have Tripoli. The answer of course is that the break up of Morocco does not imply the break up of Turkey.

E. G.

No. 225.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 35686/30691/11/44.

(No. 139.) Confidential.

Sir,

Posilipo, D. September 5, 1911.

R. September 11, 1911.

I have the honour to report that since writing my despatch No. 138, Confidential, of yesterday's date⁽¹⁾ and after having received a new packet of papers, I see reason to modify my statement as to the absence of editorial comment on the Tripoli question. So far as the official and officious journals are concerned, the statement holds good, but the latest issues of the opposition and independent press are beginning openly to treat the question as a burning one. The leading organ of the opposition, the "Giornale d'Italia," of yesterday's date, for instance, devotes some four columns to a historical review of Mediterranean rivalries, under an editorial headnote which contends that the Franco-German negotiations have brought the Mediterranean question to the forefront and that the Italian Government have at length been induced to contemplate the eventuality that the balance of power may be disturbed to the disadvantage of Italy and that it may become necessary to restore it in such measure as circumstances allow.

(¹) [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

The "Mattino" of Naples, a journal whose support or opposition is contingent on the amount of subvention or blackmail which the direction is able to extract from Governments in office, which is nevertheless influential and at present in rampant opposition, has this morning a leading article in which it is contended that Tripoli alone would not be adequate to restore the equilibrium in favour of Italy, but that it must be the Tripoli of the days of Crispi, with the larger hinterland which has since been encroached upon by later international redistributions. The moment, the writer concludes, is decisive, and the Government must have all their preparations complete in order to preclude diplomatic or other reverses.

The Prime Minister, who is generally at this season in the north of Italy has gone to Anticoli, a bathing station which can be reached in a motor car in some two hours from Rome, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs has joined him, notwithstanding that he had already spent a month there and concluded his cure some three weeks ago.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

No. 226.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 36738/30691/11/44.

(No. 142.)

Sir,

Posilipo, D. September 14, 1911.

R. September 19, 1911.

With reference to my despatch No. 141 of the 10th instant⁽²⁾, I have the honour to report that the irresponsible press of this country has been busy during the past few days circulating all kinds of fantastic rumours with regard to Tripoli. It has been announced that negotiations have been opened with the Turkish Government with a view to the establishment of an Italian Protectorate, to be paid for at a specified price. Again another organ has described the constitution of the force—three battle-ships and three cruisers with adequate disembarkation companies—which will be despatched early in October to effect a coup de main in Tripoli. The official agency is kept busy issuing contradictions of these imaginary announcements. Meanwhile the Semi-official organ of the Government, the *Tribuna*, has published in its issue of yesterday an evidently inspired leading article severely rebuking the chief journal of the opposition, the "*Giornale d'Italia*," for the pressure which it is calling upon the country to exercise, in order to induce the Government to make a definite pronouncement of policy. The article is entitled "The time to be silent and the time to speak."

The writer points out that when there exists or appears to exist a difficult and delicate international situation, the first duty of every newspaper, to whatever party it may belong, is not only to refrain from giving currency to every false rumour which is in the air, but also to be very discreet about publishing information the truth of which can be vouched for; because at such a time, publicity, whether the news be false or true, must be injurious to the interests of the country both internally and abroad. The position of Italy among the nations must be maintained with dignity and at any cost, but this will best be done by contemplating the necessities of the situation with a cool head and not by stimulating the impulsive to an excitement which will only be followed by corresponding depression. The very papers which call for declarations from the Government at the same time publish articles

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to Constantinople.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It referred to the official Italian repudiation of certain statements published in the *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna, regarding Italy and Tripoli. (F.O. 36737/30691/11/44.)]

showing that the issue of peace and war between France and Germany is still in the balance. Can any Italian pretend that it is desirable, should war, and such a terrible European war, break out, that Italy should be involved in adventures elsewhere?

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

No. 227.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 37412/30691/11/44.

(No. 143.) Confidential.

Posilipo, D. September 14, 1911.

Sir,

R. September 25, 1911.

I have the honour to report that, having learned that the Minister for Foreign Affairs would be in the capital to-day for a Cabinet Council I went to Rome and asked him to receive me.

His Excellency said he hoped to return the next day to Anticoli "to finish his cure." As however he told me about a month ago that he had then completed his cure there, and was going to the mountains to recuperate, I apprehend his real object in returning to Anticoli is to be at so critical a moment as the present, near the Prime Minister, who is undergoing the cure at those waters, and also to be out of the way of importunate questioners.

I found him distinctly optimistic as to the prospects of a favourable solution of the Morocco question, with regard to which he no doubt receives good information from the Ambassador at the allied Court. The settlement had now in his opinion advanced so far that there was not enough left to quarrel over seriously.

I then asked him directly whether the Ottoman Government had taken any notice of the vigorous campaign which the Italian press had initiated in favour of action in Tripoli, to redress the equilibrium in the Mediterranean which it was maintained would be affected by a French protectorate over Morocco. The Marquis di San Giuliano replied that the Turkish Chargé d'Affaires had been to see him the previous afternoon⁽²⁾ and had asked him—he was not sure whether under instructions or *proprio motu*—to issue an announcement on behalf of the Italian Government to the effect that they dissociated themselves from the objects advocated in this press campaign. He had replied that he did not consider they were called upon to make any such public announcement. Their policy towards Turkey had been defined in his statements in the Chamber, and he had nothing to add to them. The attitude of the organs of the press which supported the Government had been perfectly correct, but as regards the press generally there existed in Italy the principle of absolute liberty and the Government could not control its opinions or language.

His Excellency however admitted to me that the opinion thus generally manifested was very strong and almost unanimous.

I then observed that I had seen in the morning papers telegrams announcing that a boycott against Italy had been started in Tripolitan ports, and asked him if this news was correct. He replied that as yet no confirmation had been received from the Italian Consul, but if the report were wellfounded it was certainly serious, and would still further excite the public mind.

I could not without indiscretion ask him how the situation was viewed by Signor Giolitti, but from what I have heard from other sources I believe that the Prime Minister realises that active measures may be forced upon him, but his

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to Constantinople.]

⁽²⁾ [Already reported by telegram (No. 57) of September 14 (F.O. 36166/30691/11/44).]

attitude is to some extent affected by the decided opposition to any policy of expansion manifested by the Socialist Party, whose support he has bid for by his measures of internal reform, and that he recognises that without it his ascendancy might be compromised, especially now that, within his own party an active group of young politicians, known as the Young Turks, are showing a tendency to rebel. The extreme Left point to their resistance to Crispi's colonial adventures, and claim that the event justified their resistance. While a great part of Italy still lacks the first elements of civilisation they decline to countenance any hazarding of the national resources or stability in similar enterprises. The radicals and the democrats exhibit a somewhat similar negative attitude, insisting on the importance of Tripoli as a future outlet for Italian energy, but urging the policy of a peaceful penetration, a process however which is practically excluded by the present disposition of Turkey and the indiscretions of the Italian Press.

After taking leave of His Excellency I went to see the Secretary-General, who had only just returned from leave of absence, and found Signor Bollati inclined to doubt whether the Government would be able to resist the strength of the rising current. He said that in the North of Italy, where his home is, there were no two opinions as to the opportuneness of the present moment for making good those pretensions which Italians have gradually accustomed themselves to regard as a right.

If the news of the boycott were confirmed it would be considered in Italy an act of provocation, which might precipitate a crisis. Signor Bollati admitted that, should Italy be driven to take the measures which were being urged upon the Government, she would have to face the very serious issue—apart from any international difficulties which might ensue—of the position of Italian subjects in the Ottoman Empire and of the, at any rate temporary, extinction of an important export trade which had of recent years found a profitable market in Turkey.

I could not elicit directly from him or from the Minister whether any steps have been taken to sound the allied Powers, but I am inclined to deduce from their conversation that nothing has been done in this direction. There are still plenty of issues between the Italian and Turkish Governments and it is never difficult, when relations are strained to find a plausible excuse for a quarrel. In my opinion, if the Government make up their mind to find such an excuse, the probability is that a *coup de main* would follow, and that the Powers may be confronted with a *fait accompli*, before Turkey has had time to organise resistance or other states to formulate reserves and objections.

The distance from Maddalena, where the Italian fleet is now gathered after the manœuvres, to Tripoli is inconsiderable.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

P.S.—Since writing the above despatch I have learned that the Italian fleet has left Maddalena for Spezia.

R. R.

MINUTE.

Events have moved since this was written.

R. G. V.
R. P. M.
A. N.
E. G.

No. 228.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 37335/30691/11/44.

(No. 637.)

Constantinople, D. September 18, 1911.

Sir,

R. September 25, 1911.

The *Yeni Gazeta* two days ago reported that the Italian Chargé d'Affaires had had an interview with the Grand Vizier in which he was said to have declared in the name of his Government that the news published in certain Italian papers as to Italian designs in Tripoli were entirely false, and he was also reported to have made reassuring declarations on behalf of his Government.

This was immediately followed by a communiqué inspired by the Italian Embassy to the effect that at the interview in question the question of Tripoli had not been under discussion and it was stated that the matter treated of was that of the conversion of the Italian girl to Islam, (see my despatch No. 569 of the 11th August)⁽²⁾ in which the Italian Government have been unable to obtain satisfaction.

There is no doubt an increasing nervousness in Government circles regarding Italian action in Tripoli, and I understand that what the Government fear is that the people may establish a boycott of Italian goods which might easily produce an unpleasant incident and thus furnish the Italian Government with an excuse for retaliation in Tripoli.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch was sent to Rome (as No. 160) with reference to the immediately succeeding document, on October 13.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. (F.O. 32816/30691/11/44.) *cp. supra*, p. 266, *Ed. note.*]

No. 229.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 37416/30691/11/44.

(No. 148.)

Posilipo, D. September 19, 1911.

Sir,

R. September 25, 1911.

With reference to my telegram No. 57 of the 16th [*sic*: 14th] instant⁽²⁾ respecting the possibility of Italian action in Tripoli I have the honour to report that the Italian Government have recently published through the Stefani Agency a statement denying certain reports in the Turkish press as to an alleged communication made by the Italian Chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople to the Turkish Government and also regarding an alleged Italian protest against the concession to an English Group of a contract for harbour works at Tripoli.

The following is a translation of the statement:—

1. "The '*Yeni Gazette*' states 'the Italian Chargé d'affaires went yesterday to the Sublime Porte where he conferred with the Grand Vizier to whom he declared on behalf of his Government that the reports published by certain Italian papers and by telegraph agencies respecting Italian action in Tripoli were absolutely false. He renewed to Hakki Pasha the assurances of Italy to Turkey as to those erroneous statements.'

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to Constantinople.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced, as the contents are given at greater length in Sir R. Rodd's despatch No. 148 of September 14. *v. supra*, p. 270, No. 227.]

"This statement is false. No reference was made at that interview to the question of Tripoli."

2. "The paper 'Le Jeune Turc,' of Constantinople states that 'the Italian Government has protested against the construction of the harbour of Tripoli on the part of an English Group with which the Turkish Government is in treaty' and adds that the Italians have no right to the concession for that harbour, which the Turkish Government is free to grant as best suits its interests.

"The notice published by the Turkish newspaper is incorrect. The Italian Government has no objection to the concession being put up to public tender open to firms of whatever nationality provided that there are proper guarantees that the adjudication will be made fairly and without a deliberate intention to make it impossible for Italian competitors to succeed."

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

No. 280.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 37417/30691/11/44.

(No. 149.)

Sir,

Posilipo, D. September 19, 1911.

R. September 25, 1911.

With reference to my despatch No. 142 of the 14th instant,⁽²⁾ I have the honour to report that those organs of the Italian Press, in which the wish may be regarded as father to the thought, are full of rumours and reports, which have a plausibly circumstantial character of military and naval movements and preparations, indicating an activity somewhat unusual after the conclusion of the manoeuvres. It is stated for instance that firms in Naples have been invited to submit estimates for the provision of certain war material, and to state how quickly it could be furnished. The big cruisers which have been assisting in the salvage of the San Giorgio are stated to be rapidly shipping ammunition and stores and various warships are reported to be under orders for South Italian ports. Certain units are even specifically designated as told off for an expeditionary force which will concentrate between Messina and Palermo.

On the other hand the semi-official "Agenzia Italiana" has published a communication to the effect that all rumours of military preparations for Tripoli, orders to Generals and Admirals, indications of units &c. are based on no foundation.

The same journals publish a telegram from Constantinople stating that the Italian Boycott in Tripoli was intended but that counter-orders have been sent from the capital.

I have not yet received any notification from the Consulates at the Ports tending to confirm the rumour of a movement of warships towards Southern Italy.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this despatch were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Military Operations; and to Constantinople.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 269-70, No. 226.]

No. 231.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson

Private.⁽¹⁾

Fallodon, Chrston Bank,

My dear Nicolson,

Northumberland, September 19, 1911.

The death of Stolypin is a great blow to Russia and to her friends: I am very sorry.

It will be tiresome if Italy embarks on an aggressive policy and the Turks appeal to us. If the Turks do this I think we must refer them to Germany and Austria as being allies of Italy. It is most important that neither we nor France should side against Italy now.

I promised Imperiali that if Italy showed that the Turks were not treating her as well as others in Tripoli, we would tell the Turks that any action Italy took to defend her interests had been brought by the Turks upon themselves. We must hope that before Italy does anything the Turks will have done something to enable us to give this answer, if the appeal is made to us.

Yours sincerely,

E. GREY.

I have written a private line to Benckendorff about Stolypin.

(¹) [Carnock MSS., Vol. IV of 1911.]

No. 232.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 37207/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 178.)

Foreign Office, September 22, 1911, 5.45 p.m.

Following tel[egram] rec[eive]d from H[is] M[ajesty's] Acting Consul-Gen[era]l, Genoa, "Genoa, September 22, 1911, Minister of War has telegraphed orders for thirty ships to be ready tomorrow to convey troops to Tripoli. Fleet mobilised at Spezia." Have you any confirmation?

(¹) [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Military Operations: to the Director of Naval Intelligence.]

No. 233.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 37773/30691/11/44.

(No. 151.)

Posilipo, D. September 22, 1911.

Sir,

R. September 27, 1911.

With reference to my previous despatches on the subject of the attitude of the Italian press towards the Tripoli question, I have the honour to report that the non-official papers have continued during the last few days to inform the public of military and naval movements, recalls of officers, notices to Red Cross agencies and so on, many of which are afterwards contradicted or explained away. What however, is more symptomatic is an editorial note published last evening by the "Giornale d'Italia," the leading organ of the opposition, stating that though the editor continues to receive copious information of this nature from Taranto, Spezia, Naples, Syracuse,

(¹) [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Admiralty.]

and elsewhere, he considers it his duty from henceforth to exercise reserve in giving publicity to news of this character, and thus not to embarrass the Government. The paper has done its duty in urging on the Government the responsibilities of the situation, and now the time has come to keep silence. Such a course is warmly urged upon other organs of the press.

As the "*Giornale d'Italia*" is the chief supporter of, and owes its political inspiration to, Baron Sonnino, the leader of the constitutional opposition, its present attitude is not without significance.

It is also perhaps worthy of notice, under present circumstances, that a Royal Decree should have been issued just after the conclusion of the Naval Manœuvres, forming the active Italian Fleet into two squadrons, respectively containing two divisions.

The constitution of these squadrons is as follows:—

First Squadron: First Division: "*Vittorio Emanuele*," "*Regina Elena*," "*Napoli*," "*Roma*."

Second Division: "*Pisa*," "*Analfi*," "*San Marco*," "*San Giorgio*," with the subsidiary ships "*Agordat*," "*Partenope*," and "*Tevere*."

Second Squadron: First Division: "*Benedetto Brin*," "*Regina Margherita*," "*Saint Bon*," "*Emanuele Filiberto*."

Second Division: "*Giuseppe Garibaldi*," "*Varese*," "*Feruccio*," "*Marco Polo*," with the subsidiary ships "*Coatit*," "*Minerva*," and "*Eridano*."

A fifth training division is formed by the armoured cruisers "*Sic[i]lia*," "*Sardegna*," and the "*Umberto*," to which is attached also the cruiser "*Carlo Alberto*."

The first two vessels in this division had been assisting the stranded "*San Giorgio*." They have now after filling up with coal joined the main body of the fleet at Spezia.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

No. 234.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 37324/30691/11/14.

Posilipo, D. September 23, 1911, 1 P.M.

Tel. (No. 60.)

R. September 23, 1911, 6 P.M.

Your telegram No. 178.⁽²⁾

After conclusion of manœuvres Italian fleet assembled at Spezia, and has no doubt been maintained in mobile condition. Two cruisers from Naples joined fleet at Spezia on 22nd September.

I am endeavouring to obtain confirmation of reports regarding thirty transports.

Semi-official "*Tribuna*" announces that military preparations are in progress, and that situation in Tripoli has occasioned these preparations; further, that they are not necessarily to be interpreted as aggressive, but primarily due to obligation of maintaining national dignity and protecting Italian subjects abroad.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent, on September 25, to Vienna (as No. 99); to Berlin (as No. 183); to Constantinople (as No. 345); to St. Petersburg (as No. 562); to Cairo (as No. 12). A note on the paper shows that a printed copy was also sent to Paris. Copies of this and of the two following telegrams were sent to the Admiralty, to the Director of Military Operations; to the Director of Naval Intelligence.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 274, No. 232.]

No. 285.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Eduard Grey.⁽¹⁾

Rome, September 24, 1911.

F.O. 37325/30691/11/44.

D. 4.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 61.)

R. 7.15 P.M.

Ministry of Marine state that no orders respecting transports at Genoa or elsewhere have passed through their hands yet, but naval attaché understands that some vessels have received intimation to be ready.

Time-expired men on military roll of 1888 have been recalled to the colours to the number of 90,000 by Royal decree.

Admiral commanding first squadron, now coaling and furnishing at Spezia, was in Rome, but returned to Spezia yesterday, when battle-ships "Roma" and "Napoli" with cruiser "Amalfi" sailed for Syracuse. Other ships from Adriatic are moving towards Taranto.

Papers report that certain steam-ships running to the Near East have suspended sailings.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Vienna (as No. 100); to Berlin (as No. 184); to St. Petersburg (as No. 563); to Constantinople (as No. 346); to Cairo (as No. 13) on September 25; a printed copy was sent to Paris.]

No. 286.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Rome, September 24, 1911.

F.O. 37326/30691/11/44.

D. 7.45 P.M.

Tel. (No. 62.)

R. 9 P.M.

Tripoli.

I have just seen Secretary-General, who was very reticent, but his language led me to believe that he thought that action would not be long deferred. He observed: "We know beforehand that Turkey will refuse to entertain any proposal we may make." He said that reports they received showed that a dangerous popular agitation was being fomented by officers and ulemas against Italians, but (group undecypherable: ? that a) disposition was shown to distinguish between Italians and other nationals. I reminded him that we had a large Maltese colony not easily differentiated from Italians by Orientals. He said that, were they compelled to take measures to protect their subjects, such protection would of course be extended to all foreigners. Turkish force in the whole vilayet is estimated here at 6,000 all told.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Vienna (as No. 101); to Berlin (as No. 185); to St. Petersburg (as No. 564); to Constantinople (as No. 347); to Cairo (as No. 14) on September 25; a printed copy was sent to Paris.]

No. 287.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 37680/30691/11/44.

Constantinople, D. September 25, 1911, 9 P.M.

Tel. (No. 211.)

R. September 26, 1911, 8 A.M.

Grand Vizir sent a secretary to me to-day to show me a note received from the Italian Chargé d'Affaires which states that owing to the action of certain officers and

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty and to the Director of Military Operations. *cp. infra*, p. 277, No. 289, note ⁽¹⁾.]

members of the Committee of Union and Progress in Tripoli who had roused the people against Italy and Italians lives of latter were threatened and several families had already left.

As the despatch (gr[ou]p undec[ypherable]) of Turkish ships of war or troops could only have the effect of further rousing the fanatical (gr[ou]p undec[ypherable]) people Italian Gov[ernmen]t desired that they should not be sent.

H[is] H[ighness] wished to know what advice I could give him. I regretted I was not in a position to give him any and said that it seemed to me that it was rather to the other members of the Triple Alliance that Turkey should look.

H[is] H[ighness] desired to add that there was no truth whatever in any provocative action which might endanger the lives of Italians in Tripoli.

No specific complaint had ever been brought forward by Italians regarding refusal of concessions, sale of land, &c.—only vague charges—otherwise they might have been met by arrangement.

As there was a famine in Tripoli Gov[ernmen]t had sent food and the note of Italian Gov[ernmen]t placed them in a very difficult position in this respect.

MINUTE.

An inconclusive telegram.

A. N.
F. G.

No. 238.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Posilipo, September 26, 1911.

F.O. 37763/30691/11/44.

D. 12.5 P.M.

Tel. (No. 68.)

R. 5.30 P.M.

Tripoli.

Battle-ship "Giuseppe Garibaldi" and three torpedo-boat destroyers arrived at Messina yesterday, destination unknown, and four, in addition, have left Naples steering south.

Two Italian liners about to leave Naples for New York have cancelled their sailings, and a third has been chartered to be ready at Syracuse to-morrow.

This morning's papers announce that third squadron of Italian fleet is already on its way to Tripolitan waters, but information must be taken with reserve.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 239.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 37758/30691/11/44.

Therapia, D. September 26, 1911, 8.5 P.M.

Tel. (No. 212.)

R. September 27, 1911, 8 A.M.

My telegram No. 211.

Grand Vizier to-day replied to the note of the Italian chargé d'affaires to the effect that there was no effervescence in Tripoli, that Italian families need not leave,

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram and No. 211 (*v. supra*, pp. 276-7, No. 237) were sent to Rome (as Nos. 176 and 177) on September 27.]

and that the Ottoman Government was able to fulfil its duty in keeping order there as in other provinces of the Empire.

In conversation he begged the chargé d'affaires to invite his Government to calm the press in Italy. He regarded campaign of the press, as regards political pretensions, as illegitimate, but legitimate as regards her economic demands, and suggested that these should be formulated. Chargé d'affaires said he had no authority to discuss this.

No. 240.

Mr. W. Churchill to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Arthur,

Balmoral Castle, September 26, 1911.

Italy-Tripoli. I wish you would send me a line to Archerfield to let me know whether I rightly apprehend the bearings of this affair.

Will it not if it comes to war or warlike tension throw Turkey into German arms more than ever—thus making the complete causeway: Germany—Austria—Roumania—Turkey.

Will it not 2ndly detach Italy openly from the Triplice, and consequently make her desirous of the support of France and England.

Will it not thirdly increase or revive the irritation of Germany at being left out when "the vanquished nation" secures Morocco, and the poor spirited ally the noble possession of Tripoli.

The reactions of this Italian adventure threaten to be deep, and we stand both to gain and lose by it. But clearly we must prefer Italy to Turkey on all grounds—moral and unmoral.

Do you think it possible that Germany has been marking time for this to happen in order to secure an atmosphere more suited to thunderbolts?

On the whole the balance seems to turn to our advantage.

These are the crude views of ignorance, and the anxieties of a judgment suspended by wisdom.

Yours sincerely,

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. IV of 1911.]

No. 241.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Posilipo, September 27, 1911.

F.O. 37867/30691/11/44.

D. 3.18 P.M.

Tel. (No. 65.)

R. 4 P.M.

Tripoli.

Prime Minister has admitted in conversation with French Chargé d'Affaires, when latter thanked him for sympathy with the Toulon disaster, that he was personally averse from moving in Tripoli but that he could not help himself and Italy would be forced to take action as soon as French Protectorate in Morocco was definitely decided upon. Germany had been expanding her commercial interests there, and if

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Cairo (as No. 15); to Paris (as No. 242); to Berlin (as No. 187); to St. Petersburg (as No. 567); to Constantinople (as No. 348); to Vienna (as No. 102); to Madrid (as No. 92); on September 27.]

Italy refrained Austria or "some other Power," evidently referring to former, would step in.

Meanwhile Labour Party have proclaimed general strike of protest in Rome, and strikes of 24 hours are being organised in other centres. But even in Socialist party opinions are divided and agitation is half-hearted.

No. 242.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Berlin, September 27, 1911.

F.O. 37872/30691/11/44.

D. 4.15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 76.)

R. 5.15 P.M.

Tripoli.

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs asked my French colleague the day before yesterday to find out whether the French Government, as equally interested with German Government in the maintenance of Turkish stability, would be disposed to join German Government in counselling prudence at Rome. French Ambassador informed Secretary of State to-day that French Government, owing to previous assurances given to Italian Government regarding Tripoli, could not act as proposed with Germany alone, but that if the German Government made a similar proposal to all the Powers and it was accepted by them, French Government would join in representations as far as their engagements with Italy permitted.

Secretary of State said that now he did not see necessity for such a step, as danger of serious trouble seemed to be gradually disappearing. The Ottoman Government had given the German Ambassador at Constantinople to understand that they were ready to meet Italy's views respecting certain economic advantages in Tripoli; while as regards Italy he was strongly of the opinion that, although she was making warlike preparations and holding threatening language, she was really ready to seize upon any excuse for not proceeding to extremes.

No. 243.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey (1)

F.O. 37992/30691/11/44.

Constantinople, D. September 27, 1911, 11.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 213.)

R. September 28, 1911, 4.30 P.M.

Tripoli.

German Ambassador has for the last two days been very active with Italian Embassy and also in Turkish circles with a view to bringing about "conversations" and avoiding any hostile action on the part of Italy.

Ambassador is evidently very anxious that position of Germany here may be seriously affected unless he succeeds and is magnifying the dangers that may possibly follow any act of hostility on the part of Italy.

Press here has been generally quieted by Government and at present there are more indications of depression than excitement.

(1) [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Military Operations; to the Director of Naval Intelligence.]

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey

F.O. 38376/30691/11/44.

(No. 294.)

Sir,

Berlin, D. September 27, 1911.

R. October 2, 1911.

I had the honour to inform you by telegraph⁽¹⁾ of the views expressed to my French colleague by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs respecting the prospects of a peaceful solution of the Tripoli question. As regards Turkey His Excellency seems to have gathered from reports from the German Ambassador at Constantinople that the Ottoman Government were disposed at all events to meet Italy half-way as regards economic advantages and to be desirous to avoid being driven into a war. As regards Italy the Secretary of State seemed convinced that she had begun to realize the cost of a Tripoli campaign and that notwithstanding her preparations and her threatening language she was really anxious to be restrained from pushing matters to extremities. The exact expression used by Herr von Kiderlen-Waechter was that Italy would in reality have no objection to being held back "par le pan de son habit." The grounds upon which Herr von Kiderlen-Waechter based his conviction did not transpire. In any case his opinion cannot be said to be shared to any great extent by the majority of the German newspapers.

M. [Jules] Cambon expressed some surprise that while the Ottoman Government had made an appeal for mediation, or something of that nature, to the English and French Governments, they had, at all events according to the German press, taken no such step at Berlin. Herr von Kiderlen said that he had no doubt that all the Turkish Ambassadors in the capitals of the Great Powers had received similar instructions to lay their case before the Governments to which they were accredited; but that Nizamy Pasha, who was a man of intelligence, had recognised the awkwardness of making an official protest at Berlin against the proceedings of Germany's ally. He had therefore only spoken about the matter unofficially and in the course of conversation expressed the personal hope that Germany, as a good friend to Turkey, would see her way to giving a little moderating advice at Rome. As regards therefore any official step on the part of the Turkish Ambassador on the instructions of his Government the papers had said no more than the truth.

I had some conversation with M. Gueschoff, the Bulgarian Minister here, the other day. He expressed the opinion that the Turks would have to yield to Italy's demands, at all events to some of them; for it was impossible for them with their naval inferiority to make any effective resistance in the case of war. They had, it was true, a certain number of troops at Tripoli, but they were by no means, either as regards men or officers, the flower of the Turkish army. Moreover these could not be reinforced owing to the fact that Italy was already patrolling the waters between Turkey and Tripoli. He added that however the Tripoli question was solved, whether by war or by concessions on the part of the Turks, it appeared to him that the sudden and menacing attitude of Italy had placed Turkey, or all events the Young Turk régime, in a most painful, if not fatal, position. Whether Turkey yielded to Italy's threats and gave her a predominant position in Tripoli, or whether she resisted and was beaten, the result would in his opinion be the same, namely intense excitement throughout the Turkish Empire resulting probably in civil war. In such a case troubles might arise in Macedonia and Albania, but he assured me that, if the present Government remained in office at Sofia, there would be no attempt on the part of Bulgaria to profit by Turkey's misfortune. M. Gueschoff is the cousin of the present Bulgarian Premier.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

(1) [*v. supra*, p. 279, No. 242.]

No. 245.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.

F.O. 37813/30691/11/44.

(No. 149.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 27, 1911.

With reference to my despatch No. 119 of July 28,⁽¹⁾ I have to inform you that the Italian Ambassador called at this Office on Sept[ember] 20 and saw Sir A. Nicolson, who asked him whether he had any news in regard to Tripoli. He replied in the negative, and said that he was unaware what line his gov[ernmen]t would follow. But he had been instructed to say, when an opportunity occurred, that the policy of the open door w[oul]d be scrupulously observed, and that there would be no question of rectification of frontiers. H[is] E[xc]ellency asked what was the attitude of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnmen]t in regard to the question. Sir A. Nicolson told him that he believed I had explained it to him on a previous occasion. The Italian Ambassador said that that was the case, but he wished to know if there had been any change. Sir A. Nicolson told him he was not aware of any.

[I am, &c.]

[E. GREY.]

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 264, No. 221.]

No. 246.

*Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.**Vienna, September 28, 1911.*

F.O. 37996/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 95.)

D. 6.30 P.M.

R. 7.15 P.M.

Tripoli.

I saw Count Aehrenthal to-day and found him very anxious as to what may happen in Tripoli.⁽¹⁾ He said to me that he was pessimistic as to the present situation. He said that the duty of the Powers was to do their utmost without loss of time to advise calm and restraint at Rome and Constantinople. The Austro-Hungarian Government was advising moderation at both these capitals. He still hopes that, if Italy's demands are restricted to economic ones, peace may be maintained between Turkey and Italy. If Italy demands political rights in Tripoli, he does not see how Turkey can yield, and he fears that then war seems inevitable. Should war break out, he thinks that the Powers might make an attempt to localise it, that is to say, prevent hostilities breaking out in the Balkans, or, as Count Aehrenthal intimated to me, what would be still [more] preferable would be to localise the war to the province of Tripoli, and dissuade Italy from carrying on hostile operations in other parts of Turkey.

Count Aehrenthal is most anxious to know views of (group undecypherable: ? His Majesty's Government) with regard to Italian action in Tripoli, as, according to him, England can exert so much influence in the Mediterranean and on the Mediterranean Powers. I told him that I could not give him any information on this matter, as I had received none from you.

⁽¹⁾ [Some evidence of Count von Aehrenthal's anxiety at this time is to be found in his circular telegram of September 29, 1911, to Sofia, Belgrade &c. *v. O.-U.A.*, III, p. 372, No. 2678.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 37990/30691/11/44.

Tel (No. 349.)

Foreign Office, September 28, 1911.

Should hostilities break out between Italy and Turkey British naval officers in Turkish employ will doubtless remember that their contracts are only for time of peace and that their services must cease if war ensues.

[*ED. NOTE*—At the end of 1908, when Vice-Admiral Sir Douglas Gamble, K.C.B., was appointed as Naval Adviser to the Imperial Ottoman Government, Sir Edward Grey had pressed for the employment of a British Flag Officer to reorganize the Turkish Navy as being a matter "of the highest political importance." (Admiralty Archives. M. 9733/08. M. 01256/11. *cp. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, p. 283, No. 197.) Sir Douglas Gamble retired, for reasons of ill-health, early in 1910, and Rear-Admiral H. P. Williams was appointed, with a staff of six naval officers and a secretary, and arrived in Constantinople in May 1910. (Admiralty Archives, P/T. Foreign Office, 1/2/10; M. 6564/12. F.O. 371/980. 32994/32988/10/38.) He complained that he was constantly hampered by "German intrigues," and in September 1911, the British Admiralty considered that "from a naval point of view . . . it would undeniably be a serious disadvantage if the Turkish Fleet, three or four years hence, when the ships now on order are completed, were to be partially manned by German officers and men, and its action controlled by German policy," and concurred with the Foreign Office proposal to protest strongly against the rumoured appointment of two German naval officers, of rank inferior only to that of Admiral Williams himself, to serve with the Turkish Navy. The truth of the rumour was denied by the Grand Vizier, but the protest was made on September 20, 1911. (Admiralty Archives. M. 01256/11.)

A state of war between Turkey and Italy came into existence on September 29. The Turkish Fleet, for that reason, was recalled from Syrian waters, where it had been cruising, and the British officers were withdrawn on September 30, but on October 8 were authorized to remain at their posts, carrying on their organizing and instructional duties, though taking no part in hostilities. (*Ib.* P/T. F.O. 12/6/12.)

Admiral Williams' term of office under the Ottoman Government expired on April 28, 1912, when he sailed for England, accompanied by all his Staff. (*Ib.* M. 6563/12.) Rear-Admiral A. H. Limpus, C.B., had already been appointed as his successor (Naval Adviser to the Ottoman Ministry of Marine), and left London for Constantinople on May 1. His Staff of five officers followed shortly afterwards. Article 15 of Admiral Limpus' contract of service with the Ottoman Government included the understanding that, in case of war between Turkey and any other State, "Les deux parties ont le droit, si elles le désirent, de résilier le présent contrat." It was noted at the Admiralty that this article "put on record the practice during the present [*i.e.*, the Turco-Italian] war." (*Ib.* M. 6889/12; M. 9370/12.)

II.—FROM THE ULTIMATUM TO THE DECREE OF ANNEXATION, SEPTEMBER 28-NOVEMBER 6, 1911.

No. 248.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 38001/30691/11/44A.

Constantinople, D. September 28, 1911, 8.40 P.M.

Tel. (No. 214.)

R. September 29, 1911, 8.30 A.M.

Italian Chargé d'Affaires at 3 o'clock to-day presented to the Porte ultimatum declaring intention of his Gov[ernment] of proceeding to military occupation of

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

Tripoli in view of the impossibility of obtaining any satisfaction in questions relating to Italian interests there and in view of the danger to which Italians are exposed. Note expresses the hope that the necessary orders may be given to admit of this occupation. 24 hours are allowed for a reply.

Cabinet immediately met in council at palace.

No. 249.

Sir R. Paget to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 38890/30691/11/44.

(No. 62.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. September 28, 1911.

R. October 2, 1911.

Monsieur Milovanovitch, whom I went to see this morning, told me he was watching developments between Italy and Turkey with some anxiety. He trusted Turkey would be sufficiently well-advised to concede the Italian demands in Tripoli. A war would mean inevitable disaster to the Turkish arms with the result that risings would take place in various parts of the Ottoman dominions and not least in the Balkans. Albania would again be plunged into anarchy and in such an event Austria would certainly not let so favourable an opportunity pass, and under the pretext of restoring order would march into Albania. Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro to protect their interests would then do likewise and join in a general scramble for Turkish territory.

So far as any opposition on the part of Austria to others taking a hand was concerned Monsieur Milovanovitch thinks that even in the face of threats Serbia could not afford to remain inactive and that, should threats develop into action Serbia may as well die fighting. His argument is that with Austrian territory to the north to the west and to the South nothing would remain for Serbia but to throw herself entirely into the arms of Austria and her disappearance as an independent kingdom would not be long delayed.

I gathered that even apart from any such precipitation of events as might be brought about by a conflict between Italy and Turkey Monsieur Milovanovitch does not look forward to the future with much confidence.

Should no events occur to justify an Austrian occupation of Albania, Austria is planning that at least the Porte shall be forced eventually to concede Albanian autonomy and when this is accomplished, the Albanians being totally unfit to govern themselves, let alone the other nationalities, whom the autonomous Albania, according to Austrian ideas would include, Austria will feel herself called upon to step in and take charge of the administration. Serbia will then be practically if perhaps not nominally in the same position as mentioned above.

Although Serbia was the more directly menaced and the pressure here was naturally more felt Monsieur Milovanovitch did not think that if once Austria were allowed so far to accomplish her designs Bulgaria would long survive. The Bulgarian Government however appeared to be only now awakening to this fact. He had some two years ago, and periodically since then, pointed out this danger at Sofia and had made overtures for an understanding between the two countries but the Bulgarian Government only nibbled at the idea and he could never induce them to discuss the subject of a hard and fast agreement. King Ferdinand was an obstacle; he always constituted an element of uncertainty. Russia had at one time tried to help matters on but only in a half-hearted manner. It was much to be regretted as an alliance between Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro would admit of a material and very effective resistance to Austrian encroachments and in his opinion offered the only

(1) [Copies of this despatch were sent to Sofia and Constantinople from Belgrade.]

fair chance of survival for those three countries. It was unlikely Turkey would ever enter into such a combination even to save Albania unless assured of the support of one of the Great Powers. He spoke from experience gained during the Bosnia Herzegovina annexation.

Monsieur Milovanovitch's concluding observation was "we are prepared to fight either by the side of Austria and others to get Turkish territory or by the side of Turkey and others against Austria."

I have, &c.

RALPH PAGET.

MINUTE

The last paragraph is rather obscure.

L. M.
A. N.
E. G.

No. 250.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 38157/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 178.)

Foreign Office, September 29, 1911, 8 P.M.

In the course of a long conversation with Italian Ambassador who handed to me to-day a long statement in Italian of the grievances of the Italian Gov[ernmen]t against Turkey I made to him the following statement as to our attitude:—

In 1902 we had made an agreement with Italy respecting Tripoli.⁽²⁾ From this we realized that in Tripoli especially Italy could not tolerate her interests being thrust aside or unfairly treated. Besides that the traditional friendly relations between England and Italy, the friendly feelings of the two peoples were such that steps, which were forced upon Italy in any part of the world to redress the wrongs of Italian subjects or protect Italian interests from unfair treatment would have our sympathy. But the outright and forcible annexation of Tripoli was an extreme step that might have indirect consequences very embarrassing to other Powers, and amongst others to ourselves, who had so many Mahommedan subjects. I hoped therefore that the Italian Gov[ernmen]t would conduct affairs so as to limit as far as possible the embarrassment to other Powers.

The Ambassador said it would be impossible for Italy to retire from Tripoli and asked me what precisely I meant by suggesting that Italy should limit the consequences of her action.

I replied that we could not foresee what developments would follow the action of Italy and I hoped that in any developments which occurred Italy would so conduct affairs that the consequences might be as little far-reaching and embarrassing as possible.

The Ambassador asked whether I meant that we might intervene if there was war between Italy and Turkey. I replied that I was speaking from the point of view of non-intervention.

⁽¹⁾[This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 178); to Berlin (No. 188); to Vienna (No. 108); to St. Petersburg (No. 571); to Constantinople (No. 350).]

⁽²⁾[*v. Gooch and Temperley*, Vol. I, pp. 290-1.]

[*ED NOTE*.—For Count Mensdorff's reports of September 29, 1911, describing his conversations with King George and Mr. Churchill at Balmoral, *v. O.-U.A.*, III, pp. 862-9, Nos. 2667-9.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd

F.O. 38850/30691/11/44.

(No. 153.)

Your Excellency,

Foreign Office, September 29, 1911.

The Italian Ambassador came to see me to-day and reminded me that in a conversation that he had had with me in July about Tripoli I had said that Italy must show good cause for any action she took.⁽¹⁾ He then handed me a long statement in Italian which he said contained the Italian case.⁽²⁾ He said that the provocation was such that no Government could have tolerated it and yet have retained respect. For seventeen months the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs had worked every day he might say every hour for a conciliatory settlement with Turkey and to warn Turkey of the consequences that must ensue if she was not conciliatory. I said I should like to define our attitude and it was this. In 1902 we had made an agreement with Italy respecting Tripoli. From this we realised that in Tripoli especially Italy could not tolerate her interests being thrust aside or unfairly treated. Besides that the traditional friendly relations between England and Italy, the friendly feelings of the two peoples were such that steps which were forced upon Italy in any part of the world to redress the wrongs of Italian subjects or protect Italian interests from unfair treatment would have our sympathy. But the outright and forcible annexation of Tripoli was an extreme step that might have indirect consequences very embarrassing to other Powers, and amongst others to ourselves, who had so many Mahomedan subjects. I hoped therefore that the Italian Government would conduct affairs so as to limit as far as possible the embarrassment to other Powers.

The Italian Ambassador said it would be impossible for Italy to retire from Tripoli. He said that besides our conversation in July there had been another in August when, in answer to a request that we should send the Malta mails through the Italian post-office I had replied that this would only irritate the Turks without helping Italy and that I would rather reserve our support for some occasion when Italy was forced to take steps to protect her interests.⁽³⁾ The Ambassador said he then referred to the bearing which a French protectorate over Morocco might have on the Italian position towards Tripoli. He said I had observed that Morocco was falling to pieces, whereas Tripoli belonged to the Turkish Empire which was not falling to pieces and that there was therefore not a parallel between the two cases. He had said that the Italian rights in Tripoli must be settled once and for all. I said I did not contemplate then or in July the extreme step of outright and forcible annexation but some pressure on Turkey to secure fair treatment of Italian interests in Tripoli. The Ambassador said perhaps I had anticipated a naval demonstration. I said I had not defined to myself what the steps might be but no doubt something of that kind was the more usual method.

The Ambassador asked me what precisely I meant by suggesting that Italy should limit the consequences of her action. Was I urging that Italy should withdraw from Tripoli? She could not possibly do that. Did I mean that we might intervene if there was war between Italy and Turkey? I said I was speaking from the point of view of non-intervention. All I meant was that I could not accept any responsibility if grave consequences followed from the action of Italy: that we could not foresee what developments would follow that action and that I hoped that in any developments which occurred Italy would so conduct affairs that the consequences might be as little far-reaching and embarrassing as possible to other Powers.

The Ambassador dwelt upon the statement that Tripoli once occupied and direct administration taken suitable compensation, material as well as moral—he laid great

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 264, No. 221.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.]

⁽³⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 266, *Ed. note.*]

stress on the word moral—would be given to Turkey. A Reuter telegram already stated that Turkey would not resist the occupation. Could I say if this was true? I said I had no information on this point. We had when the Turks asked us to use moderating language at Rome given the answer which I had told him in July we would give. I gave him the substance of what Sir Arthur Nicolson had said to the enquiries of the Turkish Embassy here.⁽⁴⁾ If matters could be arranged with Turkey in the way he hoped we should be delighted to see Italy's interests secured without embarrassment to other Powers. If things went as the Italian Government hoped their responsibility would, of course, be light but it would be heavy if very serious developments occurred which imperilled the peace of other nations.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽⁴⁾ [On September 26, Tewfik Pasha communicated a memorandum referring to the recent Italian note as to the position of Italian subjects in Tripoli. Sir A. Nicolson said that the Italian Embassy had referred to this subject some time ago (*v. supra*, p. 264, No. 221) "but that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] had made no representation of any kind at Const[antinople]. In the present instance it was clear that the attitude of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] must be the same and that they could not intervene in differences between Turkey and Italy." (Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther, No. 305 of October 5, 1911. F.O. 38164/30691/11/44)]

No. 252.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

Rome, September 30, 1911.

F.O. 38306/30691/11/44.

D. 1.40 P.M.

Tel. (No. 72.)

R. 5.30 P.M.

Tripoli.

Minister for Foreign Affairs informs me that Italian naval commander has been instructed to treat territorial waters of Egypt as neutral. In adopting this attitude he trusts there will be reciprocity, and that Turkey will not be allowed to use Egyptian waters as a naval base.

(Repeated to Cairo.)

No. 253.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie and Mr. O'Beirne.

F.O. 38300/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 246 and No. 574.)

Foreign Office, September 30, 1911.

Please inform ^{French}~~Russian~~ Gov[ernmen]ts of our intention to issue a proclamation of neutrality, Italy having declared that a state of war exists between her and Turkey, and ascertain what ^{French}~~Russian~~ Gov[ernmen]ts intend to do.⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ [Sir A. Nicolson wrote the following minute to Sir Edward Grey accompanying the draft of the above telegram :—

"It would, I think, be desirable to ascertain what steps the French and Russian Gov[ernmen]ts propose to take in regard to issuing proclamations of neutrality. It is possible that it is not their custom to do so—but we might telegraph to Paris and St. Petersburg. . . . [Here follows the draft.]" (F.O. 38300/30691/11/44.)

No. 254.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 38298/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 180.)

Foreign Office, September 30, 1911, 2.30 P.M.

Italian Ambassador has to-day made to me the announcement of a state of war between Italy and Turkey.

I have said that we shall at once issue a proclamation of neutrality. Ambassador asked me whether we should allow passage of Turkish troops through Egypt. I said I had never considered such a question; it appeared to me however that to allow Egypt to be used for military operations while we were in occupation of it would not be consistent with proclamation of neutrality.

Ambassador asked me some hypothetical questions as to line that we might take at Constantinople. I replied that I could promise nothing except that we should issue proclamation of neutrality and await events. You should repeat to M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] statement of our attitude given in my telegram No. 178 of the 29th instant.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 245); to Berlin (No. 189); to Vienna (No. 104); to St. Petersburg (No. 573); to Constantinople (No. 352).]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 284, No. 250.]

No. 255.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 38344/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 353.)

Foreign Office, September 30, 1911, 7 P.M.

Turkish Gov[ernment] has asked us to intervene with Italy on behalf of peace. You should tell M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] what present position is. Italy did not consult us as regards the ultimatum or declaration of war and evidently therefore desired to avoid intervention to avert either of these steps. Italian Ambassador has informed me emphatically that under no circumstances can Italy ever withdraw from Tripoli, though she would be prepared to give Turkey moral and material compensation.

Turkish attitude as stated in communications from Turkish Ambassador is that territorial integrity of Turkey must not be infringed.

Position therefore is that intervention at Rome on the base indicated by Italian Ambassador would not be welcome to Turkey, while intervention on the condition laid down by Turkey would not be accepted by Italian Gov[ernment].

I fear therefore there is at present no opening for intervention.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 248); to Vienna (No. 106); to St. Petersburg (No. 577); to Rome (No. 182); to Cairo (No. 17); to Berlin (No. 190). A further telegram was sent at the same time to the Ambassadors at Paris (No. 247), Vienna (No. 105) and St. Petersburg (No. 576) authorizing them to communicate the substance of the above telegram to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Two *Aide-mémoires* based on this telegram and on Sir Edward Grey's earlier telegram of September 29 (*v. supra*, p. 284, No. 250) were sent to Count von Aehrenthal by Sir F. Cartwright on October 1. *v. Ö.-U.A.*, III, pp. 376-7, Nos. 2680-1.]

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 38887/30691/11/44.

Rome, D. September 30, 1911, 10 P.M.

Tel (No. 76.)

R. October 1, 1911, 8 A.M.

Minister for Foreign Affairs asked me to telegraph to you in following sense:—

He learns from London that English press shows marked hostility to Italian action and feels this must be due to want of knowledge of the situation which has so long prevailed in Tripoli. Italians are deeply sensitive to British opinion, and he is anxious at present moment that there should be no alienation of traditional friendship with England. It is impossible in a telegram to give concrete instances of the devices adopted to make life impossible for Italians in Tripoli. But he insisted they were continued and deliberate and had exasperated nation, which continually attacked Government for their weakness in tolerating them. As months went on they had endeavoured loyally to induce Ottoman Government to remedy these conditions by forbearance and loyalty. They had strained the law by expelling Albanian agitators during recent conflict, and had kept a squadron watching to prevent assistance being sent from Italy. To these good offices Turkish Government only replied with new aggressions and vexations. Country demanded that a term should be put to what had become unendurable. It was evident with present disposition of the Young Turks, aggressive and only concerned to increase their armaments, that half-measures were useless and would only postpone crisis till a less favourable moment for Italy. Only possible course was to make recurrence of such practices impossible in the future, after securing which end Italy was prepared to be very generous as to material, conditions, and forms. Something in nature of former Austrian tenure in Bosnia and Herzegovina appeared to him to offer possible solution, and, financially, Turkey should suffer no loss.

As regards developments which might indirectly ensue, Italy had acted with such consideration for anxieties of other States as circumstances admitted. She had waited till Albanian complications had subsided, and until autumn season made prospects of movements in Balkans improbable; Government would willingly have deferred action still longer, but that after October Tripoli coast was practically inaccessible. Italy would not imitate course followed by Austria-Hungary in haggling over compensations. Government believed drastic action, followed by conciliatory attitude, to be best course adopted to ensure rapid solution, and prevent ulterior indirect consequences.

His Excellency afterwards referred also to altered balance of power in the Mediterranean resulting from French protectorate in Morocco, and expressed confidence that we should prefer Italy to some other Power as neighbour to Egypt.

He had induced manager of Press Information Bureau to suppress certain telegrams indicating English opinion as hostile. Meanwhile, he insisted that nation was united, army and navy enthusiastic, and any coldness at the present time between Italy and Great Britain would be deplorable.

Despatch follows.⁽¹⁾

MINUTES.

The line taken by the English Press (with some exceptions) is deplorable and I think serious endeavours should be made to induce them to observe neutrality. The only result of the abuse which they are hurling at Italy will be that we shall lose Italian sympathy, which has been ours from the time of Italian unity and throughout the Boer war; and that we shall encourage Turkey to expect material support and prolong and possibly extend the area of the war.

It ought to be possible to induce some of the less unreasonable Editors to maintain a decent neutrality and they might be reminded that their hysterical outbursts against Austria 5 years ago did not improve matters. . . .⁽²⁾

L. M.
A. N.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately succeeding document.]

⁽²⁾ [The draft for a suggested telegram which follows was replaced by one drafted by Sir Edward Grey and sent on October 2. v. *infra*, p. 296, No. 264.]

I had already shown this telegram to Mr Braham of the Times and had a conversation with the Italian Ambassador before seeing these minutes: the Ambassador did not seem dissatisfied with what I said to him and I drafted a telegraphic report of it to Sir H. Rodd.⁽³⁾

F. G.

(3) [*v. infra*, p. 296, No. 264.]

No. 257.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 38783/30691/11/44.

(No. 161.)

Rome, D. September 30, 1911.

R. October 4, 1911.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that the Minister for Foreign Affairs said to me this morning that he had learned from telegrams from London, to his great regret, that the opinion of the press in England was hostile to the attitude which Italy had been compelled to take up with regard to Tripoli.

I said that such newspapers as I took in, had not, in the latest issues which I had received, exhibited any trace of hostility. There might however be appreciations subsequent to the ultimatum of a different character, and in any case Italy could hardly, in view of the course she had taken, expect to escape from considerable criticism from an independent press.

His Excellency said it was because the press in England was independent and fair that he felt convinced that these criticisms must be due to want of knowledge of the circumstances and it was evident that some misapprehensions existed, as the crisis was regarded as having suddenly and unexpectedly arisen.

He said there was a disposition to claim that Italy ought to explain and tabulate her grievances against the Turkish administration in Tripoli. This was not an easy matter and those who had not been behind the scenes would probably scarcely realise the ingenuity with which the Turks, past masters in such devices, have obstructed development of Italian enterprise while encouraging that of other nations. To quote a concrete instance of their *modus procedendi*. There were a number of Italian mills established in Tripoli. The mill owner would enter into an agreement with a native grower to buy his grain. The latter would then be forbidden by the local authority to sell his grain to Italians. Having made a contract he would disregard this prohibition and complete the transaction. A few days later he would be apprehended on a charge of some contravention of which he was entirely innocent and thrown into prison, on a sentence regularly emanating from the local magistrate. He would know however perfectly well that he was being punished for selling his corn to Italian Mills, and would therefore abstain ever afterwards from doing so. Representations were useless. There was in fact no ostensible ground on which they could be made. Such instances could be multiplied to any extent and thus in innumerable ways a firm determination was shown to break any Italian undertaking or enterprise in Tripoli, while every encouragement was given to those of other nations. Fair words were not wanting from Constantinople and testimony had been borne here in official utterances to the good-will thus frequently expressed, but the facts did not alter, and the situation had been greatly aggravated since the revolution in Turkey. The Italian Government had shown the greatest forbearance and constantly preached patience, but they were overwhelmed with complaints, and continually attacked for their weakness. The chronic strain on relations with Turkey had affected Italian interests in many directions. Nevertheless the Italian Government had done their best to maintain their benevolent attitude towards the new régime. They had loyally assisted the Turks when embarrassed by the Albanian question in keeping a squadron at sea to prevent any assistance being sent to the insurgents from Italy, and had even violated the law of hospitality and strained the interpretation of the civil law in expelling

Albanian agitators from Italy. So far from their efforts being appreciated at Constantinople they were only met by further vexations and aggressions. There were a number of issues outside those in Tripoli. The attitude adopted by Turkey towards Italy in questions of this kind was not one which was consistent with her national dignity, and for some time past it had been clear that matters must come to a crisis. In such circumstances half-measures were useless. Any action short of the most drastic would only have led to the employment of such weapons as the boycott, which might drag on interminably with no definite solution and would affect other nations as well as the Italians and would in the end have brought about the same result as far as Italy was concerned. The Young Turks had invented weapons to use in international differences which could only be countered by a sharper weapon still. The Italian Government had come to the conclusion that the only possible satisfactory solution of the Tripoli question would be one in which the Turks would be in the future rendered impotent to renew these vexations, and that was by an Italian occupation. They were ready to veil the fact of occupation in any form which would make it more acceptable and to be generous in financial conditions, once the step was taken. There were many satisfactions they could offer to Turkish amour propre and there were material advantages which they were willing to offer. But it was impossible to continue in the state of perpetual tension which had now so long prevailed.

There was also the factor of the balance of power in the Mediterranean now seriously modified by the prospect of a French protectorate in Morocco. They could not sit quietly still and see other nations encouraged to secure a business footing in Tripoli which was denied to them, and which might ultimately become a pretext for anticipating Italy in what had long been regarded as a legitimate object of ambition in certain eventual circumstances. Any effort to secure justice by forcible measures which stopped short of actual occupation would only have aggravated the situation and led to greater complications and conditions which might produce even more serious consequences.

Having just received your telegram No. 178⁽¹⁾ recording a conversation with the Italian Ambassador I repeated to His Excellency the hope that you had expressed that Italy would so conduct affairs that the consequences of her action might be as little far-reaching and embarrassing as possible.

The Marquis di San Giuliano replied that this object had been kept in view by the Italian Government. Although they had for some time been convinced that drastic action would be inevitable, they had waited until the troubles in Albania had subsided, and till the season was so far advanced as to make any movement in the Balkans, with winter so near at hand, improbable. They would even have deferred action still longer were it not that after the middle and at any rate the end of October the weather would render a disembarkation[sic] in Tripoli practically impossible. He had good reason to believe that there was little likelihood of any serious developments in the Balkans at the present moment, and Italy had chosen her time with due regard to this eventuality. Their efforts would be directed to localising the struggle, and he trusted Turkey would realise the uselessness of prolonging it. He had made public his instructions to Italian representatives in the Balkan States, which were to make it plain that Italy would give no encouragement to any who endeavoured to use the present opportunity to disturb the status quo there. As to the Mahommedan question, he said that we ourselves had had our experiences of friction with Turkey, without its having led to any untoward developments in Asia, and as far as Egypt was concerned he could not but think that it would rather be to our advantage to have Italy as a neighbour.

In the present case the nation was united and enthusiastically supported the Government, and at such a moment he was afraid that any want of sympathy with the action which they had been forced to take, displayed by the friendly British nation, would leave a painful impression behind which it might be difficult to eradicate. The

(1) [*v. supra*, p. 284, No. 250.]

Italian people had been almost the only one which during the South African war had shown any sympathy with the British nation, and that in spite of the fact that the natural instinct of Italians, after their own long struggle for independence, was always on the side of weaker nationalities struggling for their independent existence. And this arose from the firm conviction that Great Britain had reasons of irresistible cogency which compelled her to undertake an ungrateful duty. He trusted that the same justice would be done to the motives of Italy and he begged me to telegraph to you the substance of what he had put before me.

This I have accordingly done in my telegram No. 76⁽²⁾ of yesterday.

I will reserve any comments on our conversation for the messenger.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

MINUTES.

See tel[egram] to Sir R. Rodd No. 189⁽³⁾ which deals with this subject

R. G. V.
Oct[ober] 4.
R. P. M.

The Press seems to be becoming more sensible although the "Daily Mail" which has a large circulation in Italy still distinguishes itself by the fatuity of its leading articles. Any sign of a Pro-Turkish agitation should be stifled, if possible, as it will only prolong the war.

L. M.
E. A. C.
Oct[ober] 7.
A. N.
E. G.

⁽²⁾ [r. *supra*, p. 288, No. 256.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *infra*, p. 296, No. 264.]

No. 258.

Communication from Tewfik Pasha, of September 30, 1911.

Grand Vizier to Tewfik Pasha.

F.O. 38346/30691/11/44.

Télégramme déchiffré.

Malgré le délai excessivement court de 24 heures fixé par l'Italie dans l'ultimatum que je vous ai communiqué par mon télégramme du 28 courant, nous nous étions, comme vous savez, empressés de répondre, bien avant son expiration que le G[ouvernement] italien n'avait pas besoin de procéder à une occupation pour obtenir de nous en Tripolitaine et en Cyrénaïque des gara[n]ties sur l'expansion économique désirée par elle. Nous nous déclarons prêt[s] à souscrire à ces garanties en tant qu'elle[s] n'affecteraient pas notre intégrité territoriale tout en prenant l'engagement de ne pas modifier, durant les pourparlers, notre situation militaire dans lesdites provinces. Sans même répondre à cette offre conciliante, le Gouv[ernement] italien en même temps qu'il envoyait sa flotte devant Tripoli et qu'il fait attaquer, avant l'expiration du délai, un de nos torpilleurs dans les eaux de l'Adriatique, nous envoya une déclaration de guerre formelle que son Chargé d'Affaires venait de nous remettre en demandant ses passeports.

Péniblement surpris par cette hostilité que notre attitude à l'égard de l'Italie est loin de justifier, nous voulons croire qu'il est encore possible voir les dispositions conciliantes dont nous sommes animés, d'arrêter les malheureux effets d'une guerre sans cause réelle. Nous faisons pour cela appel aux sentiments pacifiques et humanitaires ainsi que [l']amitié du G[ouvernement] anglais afin qu'il veuille bien intervenir auprès d'Italie et la convaincre de notre sincère désir de traiter avec elle pour prévenir une effusion de sang inutilement.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 39265/30691/11/44.

(No. 167.) Very Confidential.

Sir,

Rome, D. October 1, 1911.

R. October 7, 1911.

In my despatch No. 161 of yesterday's date⁽¹⁾ I have endeavoured to reproduce the arguments elaborated by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to justify the Italian ultimatum and the declaration of war with Turkey.

The Marquis di San Giuliano is far too intelligent to believe that the plea in justification thus put forward would carry conviction, and were he not sitting in the chair of office he would no doubt readily admit that moral and ethical considerations are in such circumstances relegated to a second place. I am quite aware that both he and his predecessors have for a long time past informed me that the perpetual tension of relations with Turkey created an intolerable situation, which no other great power would put up with and I do not wish to minimise the difficulties and disabilities from which Italian enterprise in Tripoli has been made to suffer, of which I have been continually reminded during the last year. But it is also true that these have been largely traceable to the impulse given to Young Turkish chauvinism there by the attitude of semi-proprietorship over Tripoli adopted by public men and by the Press in Italy. To pretend that these grievances morally sufficed to justify the forcible seizure of the Vilayet is hardly tenable.

The real motive for the very grave step which has been taken must rather be sought in the arguments which His Excellency developed in conversation with me some two months ago and which I reported in my despatch No. 116, Confidential, of the 31st July last.⁽²⁾ The great extension about to take place in the North African Empire of France will undoubtedly modify the balance of influence in the Mediterranean, and if justification is to be pleaded it can only be on the ground of political necessity.

This is, I believe, the consideration which has weighed with the President of the Council who has, I am convinced, taken with reluctance a step which has embroiled him with a large number of his political supporters. He has moreover convinced himself that an undoubted majority in the country, at any rate as represented in Parliament, had definitely made up its mind that the moment had come to realise the reversion of Tripoli, which though only contingent on special circumstances had become an essential feature of the national faith. Too much importance need not be attached to the contention he has put forward that, if Italy did not now make good her pretensions, some other Power would shortly anticipate her, though it has more than once been rumoured here that encouragement was being given by at least one of her allies to the obstructive methods of the Turkish Valis. The fact was however patent that Tripoli was the only remaining portion of the North African seaboard not yet under the influence of one of the western powers, and there may have been some ground for apprehending that the power, which has most actively intervened to impede the extension of French influence, might have eventual designs on a territory, which if not particularly desirable in itself as a possession, would provide a useful means of creating trouble in bordering areas of Africa.

It was also clear that the occasion was one which might never present itself again under such promising conditions. The neutral attitude of France was assured, and Germany, which was about to acquire immense accessions of African territory by a not very scrupulous method of procedure, difficult as her position would become with Turkey, could not decently object when her ally protested, "*Ego cur acquirere pauca Invidetur.*" Austria-Hungary with an eye on the Eastern shores of the Adriatic would not be altogether indisposed to see Italy's attention fixed elsewhere. The conditions

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 289-91, No. 257.]

⁽²⁾ [This despatch is printed in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. VII, p. 425, No. 445.]

actually prevailing in Tripoli amounting almost to a state of famine, the practical impossibility of reinforcing its garrison and the preoccupations of Turkey in other provinces, rendered the task an apparently easy one. On the other hand, the militant attitude of the young Turks warranted the presumption that this state of things would not long be allowed to continue. Thus the conviction was overwhelmingly strong that now or never Italy's opportunity had come, and opportunity has done what it is proverbially credited with doing.

While the Prime Minister and many of the more sober Italians have mentally buoyed themselves up with the plea of political necessity, it has not been I gather, without serious misgivings in several quarters. The situation was recently compared by a deputy of my acquaintance to the one which he had personally experienced, in being compelled to fight two duels. He did not approve of duelling in the abstract and all the influence of his friends had been against his going out, but he had felt that his position would be irretrievably lost if he refrained and he had reluctantly bowed to a disagreeable necessity.

While this explanation of the aggressive action of Italy may be accepted as supplying the motive which has weighed with men who are personally disinterested and genuinely patriotic, there have been also other factors of one of which I speak with some hesitation, as it implies an insinuation which it would be impossible to substantiate by definite proof. There is however no doubt that one of the influences which has been most active in informing the popular view, has been that of finance. The Banca Romana, is, as I have mentioned in previous reports, deeply involved in Tripolitan investments. I have been given to understand that not so very long ago the Banca Romana was in a very uncomfortable situation and its ventures in Tripoli were proving disastrous. The Manager of the Banca d'Italia is said to have been induced to come to its assistance, and it is suggested that certain pledges were forthcoming as an inducement, pledges with which the names of prominent men have been associated. That a strong propaganda has been made by the Banca Romana in the Italian press there is, I think, little doubt, and it is unfortunately true that a considerable proportion of the innumerable journals published in this country could not exist without financial assistance, so that such a campaign is easily organised and is not prohibitively costly as an investment.

Another argument which has had its influence and which is in a great measure well-founded is that Italy, which has, it would seem never really been regarded by Turkey as a first-class power, was compelled by the attitude of the Ottoman Government to take some drastic action to secure the respect to which she holds herself entitled, and she was perfectly aware that any measures of reprisal taken by her now would be met with the boycott and the other weapons which the New Turkey has adopted, and that this would have equally resulted in war.

Another important factor at the present conjuncture is that the clerical party have identified themselves with the nationalists and are in favour of the absorption of Tripoli. Clerical influence is still very strong in Southern Italy and Sicily, which has always coveted Tripoli as a market for its produce and a prospective outlet for its surplus population. Successive Governments in Italy have continually been reproached, and not unjustly, with neglecting the interests of the South, and a failure to make good the present opportunity would have entailed bitter resentment and have reinforced the spirit of particularism. . . .⁽³⁾

As regards the attitude of other countries I was under the impression, having only read the Italian papers when I wrote my despatch No. 163 of to-day's date,⁽⁴⁾ that the German press which had murmured ominously up to the moment of the ultimatum, had seen the wisdom of not offending an ally when there was no longer hope to influence its decision and had changed its tone to cordial support. Such was

⁽³⁾ [Two paragraphs are omitted for reasons of international courtesy.]

⁽⁴⁾ [Not reproduced. It is chiefly concerned with the attitude of the Press in England and in Italy. (F.O. 38785/30691/11/44.)]

evidently the general impression among the public here, inasmuch as demonstrations of acknowledgment were made the day before yesterday in front of the German and the French Embassies. It is however evident that the telegrams sent to the Italian press from Germany must have been carefully edited and selected, as I learn from the English papers which arrived subsequently that the more important organs of opinion in Germany have condemned the precipitation of Italy quite as strongly as the English press has done. The German Ambassador also, who came to see me yesterday did not disguise his opinion that the Italians of to-day were emulating the morality of the condottieri of old, though he admitted that it would not suit German policy to say so openly, and that they had no choice but to stand by an ally. Several German organs appear at the same time to see an opening for diverting the indignation of Turkey towards Great Britain by suggesting that Italy must be acting under her inspiration. The Austrian press, at any rate as reflected here has, since the ultimatum displayed an unwonted cordiality for Italy, which has not at present seen occasion to mistrust the "dona ferentes."

In Government and military circles great optimism is expressed as to the probable short duration of the campaign, which it is therefore confidently maintained will not affect the general situation in the Near East.

I have, &c.

RENELL RODD.

No. 260.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

St Petersburg, October 1, 1911.

F.O. 38323/30691/11/44.

D. 8.5 P.M.

Tel. (No. 230.)

R. 9.30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 574.⁽²⁾

I made a communication to-day to the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs as directed. He stated that Russia would also issue a proclamation of neutrality, but this would require a little time, as the Emperor's signature must be obtained.

Your telegram No. 353⁽³⁾ to Constantinople.

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me that Turkey had also asked Russia to intervene with Italy. He had said to the Turkish Ambassador that the only possible basis for a pacific solution was the occupation of Tripoli by Italy which the Turkish Government did not seem to be prepared to accept. On the other hand, he had expressed to the Turkish Ambassador Russia's extreme willingness to join in concerting steps directed towards avoiding an outbreak of hostilities in the Balkan Peninsula.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Constantinople (as No. 355); to Rome (as No. 187).]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 286, No. 253.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 287, No. 255.]

No. 261.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 38784/30691/11/44.

(No. 162.)

Rome, D. October 1, 1911.

Sir,

R. October 4, 1911.

I have the honour to report that a minor naval engagement between the Turkish and Italian destroyers has already taken place in the neighbourhood of

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this despatch were sent to the Admiralty and to the Director of Military Operations.]

Prevesa, and was to be anticipated in view of the circumstances reported in my telegram No. 71 of yesterday's date.⁽²⁾ and that one of the two Turkish destroyers or torpedo craft which attempted to make a sortie was driven ashore and wrecked.

Under the circumstances the Italian Government have issued to this morning's papers a further communiqué to the following effect:

"The Italian Government have already more than once declared that in spite of the state of war with Turkey their determination to uphold the territorial status quo in the Balkan Peninsula remains firmer than ever.

"The naval operations which the Royal Navy is compelled to execute in European waters do not modify this resolution of the Government.

"These operations are exclusively directed to guarantee our coasts, our unfortified towns, our commerce, as well as the safety of the military expedition to Tripoli against ascertained and menacing designs and preparations of the enemy."

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

(²) [Not reproduced. It stated that five Turkish destroyers were in the neighbourhood of Prevesa. (F.O. 38308/30691/11/44.)]

No. 262.

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey.

Sofia, October 2, 1911.

D. 12.30 P.M.

R. 4.55 P.M.

F.O. 38562/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 18.)

Tripoli.

Italian action has been received here with calm. Bulgarian Government are unlikely to take advantage of situation as long as Austria remains quiet.

Repeated to Constantinople and Vienna.

No. 263.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

Vienna, October 2, 1911.

D. 2.10 [P.M.]

R. 4 [P.M.]

F.O. 38558/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 99.) Very Confidential.

Tripoli.

A person in close touch with the Austro-Hungarian F[oreign] O[ffice] came to see me this morning to say that, although it was now shown that Italian troops had not landed at Preveza, the fact that Italy is carrying on war against Turkey in the Adriatic leaves the situation very grave. It is considered here according to my informant that the A[ustro]-H[ungarian] Gov[ernment] may see itself compelled to protest against the Italian naval action being carried out along the Albanian coast. Austria cannot view with indifference Italy parading her flag within sight of Albanian population which might lead to an increase of her prestige amongst the Albanians. In official circles it is earnestly hoped that Italy will proceed with great caution and not give cause by anything she does to alarm public opinion in this country.

(¹) [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

My informant tells me that orders were sent out yesterday to all naval reserve officers having headquarters at Pola and to military officers belonging to corps stationed along Italian frontier to hold themselves ready to be called out for possible service.

Sent to Rome.

MINUTES

I should be inclined to pass this on in a confidential manner to the Italian Government. Sir R. Rodd might give the Minister for Foreign Affairs a friendly hint of the desirability of clearing out of the Adriatic.

L. M.

Italy's action is to prevent raids by Turkish destroyers on her unprotected towns. I daresay if the destroyers left the Italians would also. I doubt it being advisable for us to give any hints as to such matters—and we had better say nothing.

A. N.

The telegrams this evening state that Austria has made her own notification to the Italians. If so any warning is unnecessary, but in any case we must be on our guard against becoming the tool of Count Aehrenthal to convey unpleasant warnings to Italy; otherwise Italy may think that we are working for Austria.

E. G.

No. 264.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.

F.O. 98887/80691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 189.)

Foreign Office, October 2, 1911, 7 P.M.

Italian Ambassador has spoken to me in sense of your telegram No. 76.⁽¹⁾ I have replied that he must remember that Italian ultimatum with only 24 hours' notice followed by declaration of war took everybody by surprise; that when subsequently Italian case was known it seemed rather to require compensation and guarantees for the future; that demands of this nature including even an option on Tripoli if Turks ever parted with it and backed if need be by a naval demonstration would have had whole hearted sympathy of press here. But extreme step now taken of unconditional annexation might have inconvenient consequences to other Powers including ourselves. All these considerations checked sympathy of British Press. Nevertheless Times articles were not unfriendly and it must not be thought that British friendship for Italy did not exist.

Real fact was that Italian action had been a great shock and but for strong friendship for Italy the comments of our Press would have been very much worse.

Ambassador seemed to appreciate truth of this.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 288, No. 256.]

No. 265.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 98806/80691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 184.)

Foreign Office, October 2, 1911.

Your telegram No. 72.⁽²⁾

You can inform M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that it would not be consistent with neutrality proclaimed by H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] that they should allow Egyptian or any territory or territorial waters in their occupation to be used as a base of operations for war.

(¹) [This telegram was repeated to Cairo, No. 21.]

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 286, No. 252.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Paget.

F.O. 38987/30691/11/44.

(No. 25.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 2, 1911.

The Servian Ch[argé] d'Aff[aire]s informed Sir A. Nicolson this afternoon that his Gov[ernmen]t desired to remain passive in the present crisis, but that, notwithstanding the pacific assurances of the Vienna Cabinet, they feared that Austria-Hungary might take advantage of the occasion to encourage the troubles in Albania in order to justify her intervention. Should Austria move into the Sanjak of Novi Bazar, Servia could not remain passive, but even at the cost of her national existence would have to take action—Sir A. Nicolson told him that we had received no indications whatever that Austria-Hungary was not perfectly sincere in her desire to see the status quo in the Balkans remain undisturbed: and asked if his Gov[ernmen]t had any precise grounds for their fears. He replied in the negative, but they feared from past experience, that Austria was nourishing designs. He said he was also instructed to ask whether we would say a word at Sofia in favour of Bulgaria and Servia coming to a mutual understanding to defend their common interests. Sir A. Nicolson enquired whether his Gov[ernmen]t had taken any steps at Sofia in that direction. He replied in the affirmative, but that the Bulgarians had not shown any eagerness. Sir A. Nicolson told him that he could not give him a reply off-hand. The Servian Chargé d'Affaires observed that formerly we had looked with favour on a Serbo-Bulgarian understanding.

Sir A. Nicolson informed him that we remain quite favourable to good understanding between the Balkan States, but that this must be based upon their own perception of the solidarity of their own interests, and though this tendency will have our entire goodwill, we cannot take an active initiative in promoting it.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 267.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir F. Cartwright.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Cartwright,

Foreign Office, October 2, 1911.

Many thanks for your letter which I received by the Messenger.⁽²⁾ I am so exceedingly busy to-day that I fear I cannot reply to it at any length, as you can imagine that this Tripoli business absorbs all one's time.

I believe that all telegrams are repeated to you, so that I need not go into any details. I am exceedingly vexed at the tone of our Press here towards Italy, as I fear that it may arouse such feelings in that country as will take some time to

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. V of 1911.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. The reference is apparently to a letter of September 29, which relates to a number of subjects. The following extract is relevant to the Tripoli question:—

“As regards the actual question of Tripoli, Aehrenthal was not very communicative; he said he had advised moderation both at Rome and at Constantinople, but he was afraid that these efforts to maintain the peace would prove unsuccessful. He said to me that if Italy could only be satisfied by the grant of great economic advantages in Tripoli, Turkey—in his opinion—was ready to yield; but if Italy insisted on military occupation of Tripoli, or on the acquisition of political privileges there, war would ensue. If war broke out, then—in Aehrenthal's opinion—it would be the duty of the Powers to do their utmost to localise the struggle and limit the fighting area, if possible, to the province of Tripoli itself. Aehrenthal evidently dreads the war spreading to the Balkan Peninsula, as in that case Austria would be forced to play a leading rôle in the issue, and would probably have to go to great expense to mobilize her forces.” (Carnock MSS., Vol. V of 1911.)]

obliterate. It seems to me exceedingly foolish that we should displease a country with whom we have always been on the most friendly terms and whose friendship to us is of very great value, in order to keep well with Turkey, who has been a source of great annoyance to us and whose Government is one of the worst that can well be imagined. I should far prefer having Italy as a neighbour to Egypt than the Turks, and I think our Press has gone quite on the wrong tack in criticising with such severity the action of Italy, though perhaps the actual conditions of her case did not justify her action, but still afford no ground for us to raise the storm which is taking place here against her. It would indeed be disastrous if the Italians came to serious differences with Austria, and I trust that there will be no landings on the Albanian coast, though from a telegram which has just come in from Lowther, it would appear that the Italians have seized the Custom House at Parga. I wonder if Aehrenthal has any idea, should events develop into a wider area than at present, of allowing his scheme for an autonomous Albania to take any practical shape? I know that everybody is loud in their assertions of their desire to maintain the status quo in the Balkans, but events may move in such a manner as may make this exceedingly difficult to carry into effect.

If, as I imagine, the second Turkish appeal for European intervention does not succeed, the Turks will then set to work to cause us all as much trouble as they possibly can. The near future is so full of every kind of possibility that it is useless to speculate upon what may actually occur. Our attitude will be one of complete neutrality, and we shall, within the next day or two, as soon as the necessary formalities are completed, issue a Proclamation of Neutrality. This we intend to cover Egypt which, as we are in occupation, cannot be made the basis of any warlike operations on one side or the other.

I wish I could write you at greater length, but I am afraid I have no time. I trust that the shortness of my reply will not deter you from keeping me fully informed by private letter.

[A. NICOLSON.]

No. 268.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 38768/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 358.) Confidential.

Foreign Office, October 3, 1911, 7 P.M.

I have received two more requests from the Turkish Government for intervention at Rome, but the situation remains as stated in my telegram of Saturday.⁽²⁾

It is clear that diplomatic intervention on the basis requested by Turkey would be regarded by Italy as an unfriendly step, and would be quite ineffectual.

I hear now that the French, Russian, and Austrian Governments have taken the same view, and the German Emperor appears from your telegram No. 228⁽³⁾ to have been even more emphatic and explicit. You can reply verbally in sense of first two paragraphs.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 251), to Berlin (No. 195); to St Petersburg (No. 581); to Cairo (No. 27); to Rome (No. 191); to Vienna (No. 110).]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 287, No. 255.]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced, as the tenour is sufficiently indicated above.]

[ED. NOTE.—Count Mensdorff reported an interview with Sir Edward Grey on October 4, *v. O.-U.A.*, III, pp. 391-2, No. 2705, in which the Tripoli question was discussed. Reference is also made to an interview upon the same subject with King George and Mr. Asquith on the 3rd. *ib.*, pp. 390-1, No. 2704.]

No. 269.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 89266/30691/11/44.

(No. 168.) Confidential.

Sir,

Rome, D. October 3, 1911.

R. October 7, 1911.

I have the honour to report that the German Ambassador, who makes no secret of the embarrassment which the action of Italy in Tripoli has caused to his Government, and is very outspoken in expressing his views as to that action in conversation with me volunteered the observation that in one respect the Italians had shown some tact, and that was in not making any previous announcement of their intentions to their allies. Had they done so it would have been awkward as there would inevitably have been discussions and perhaps objections which would have led to friction. I was glad to hear this testimony from him as it confirms the deductions which I had already made and reported to you in my despatch No. 143 Confidential, of the 14th ultimo.⁽¹⁾

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

⁽¹⁾ [r. *supra*, pp. 270-1, No. 227.]

No. 270.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, October 5, 1911.

F.O. 89058/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 100.) Confidential.

D. 1.50 [P.M.]

R. 3.30 [P.M.]

Tripoli.

French Ambassador yesterday saw Baron von Aehrenthal and found him in a very bad humour. He laid the blame of Italy's action in Tripoli on France, who had given bad example of going to Fez and thereby raised the Morocco question. French Ambassador replied with vigour that the acute phase of the Morocco question had started from the day when Germany sent a ship to Agadir. Count von Aehrenthal then passed to the question of Tripoli and declared that he thought all attempts at intervention at the present moment would prove fruitless but he hoped that a propitious occasion might present itself for doing so before long. The most that could be done by the Powers just now was to localize war to Tripoli and prevent its extension to other parts of the Turkish Empire.

With regard to news which reached Vienna yesterday of further firing by Italian ships off Preveza Count von Aehrenthal showed much annoyance but from his language French Ambassador gathered that he was inclined to treat such events rather as accidents than as planned incidents of the war. Count von Aehrenthal evidently wishes to avoid anything which might embitter future relations between Austria and Italy which were so good before the outbreak of the war. Count von Aehrenthal showed anxiety with regard to state of things in Turkey. He regretted the absence of men there capable of dealing with the crisis; he hoped that Kiamil Pasha would succeed in forming a Ministry and that Hilmi would join it. Count von Aehrenthal said that news from Albania was unsatisfactory and that it was therefore all the more important that Italy should be careful not to do anything which might excite unrealizable expectations on the part of the Albanians.

MINUTES.

Everyone is anxious to mediate at the right moment.

We must watch the opportunity: Sir G. Lowther might be told to report immediately if he sees an opening—he is on excellent terms with Kiamil. I suppose the Italian government is aware of our willingness to assist. The question is very delicate, as a premature attempt might make matters worse.

L. M.

A. N.

Sir G. Lowther has already been instructed as proposed.

E. G.

[*ED. NOTE.*—On October 5, Count Mensdorff reported discussions which had taken place both at Balmoral and in the Foreign Office upon "The Cartwright Interview." *O.-U.A.*, III, pp. 396–8, No. 2712. *cp. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. VII, p. 837, *App. V*, and *infra*, pp. 785–7, *App. VII.*]

No. 271.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 38980/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 252.)

Foreign Office, October 5, 1911, 5 P.M.

Your tel[egram] 164.⁽¹⁾

I agree entirely with desire of M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] to be instrumental in bringing about an arrangement between Italy and Turkey on first favourable opportunity. I will instruct British Ambassador at Constantinople as M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] desires and I am ready to consider at any time anything that M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] can suggest.

But present moment offers apparently no opening for mediation. The only advice that can usefully be given to Turkey is to acquiesce at least in Italian occupation of Tripoli. To offer this advice at Constantinople now would not gain us the goodwill of Turkey nor be effective.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced, but *cp. infra*, p. 301, *Ed. note.*]

No. 272.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 38980/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 362.)

Foreign Office, October 5, 1911, 5.30 P.M.

Following from Bertie⁽¹⁾ :—

French M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] considers that it is most important that French, British and Russian Gov[ernmen]ts should be ready at the first opportune moment to offer their good offices to bring about an arrangement between Italy and Turkey so as to anticipate any action by the German Emperor as the honest broker to gain the goodwill of both those countries with all the consequent political advantages.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. Ed. note immediately following.*]

French M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] is anxious that the French and British Embassies at Constantinople should act in close communication with each other so as to endeavour to put a stop to the supremacy of the German Embassy.

I have replied :—⁽²⁾

You should keep in close touch with French Ambassador and keep me informed of any indication that points to an opening for mediation. I conclude from your No. 237⁽³⁾ that Grand Vizier made no comment whatever on your communication to him.⁽⁴⁾

⁽²⁾ [Here follows the text of the telegram which appears as the immediately preceding document.]

⁽³⁾ [Telegram No. 237 from Sir G. Lowther, D. October 4, R. October 5 (F.O. 38928/30691/11/44), merely states that a communication had been made to the Porte on October 4, as instructed in Sir Edward Grey's telegram No. 358 of October 3. *v. supra*, p. 298, No. 268.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*v. Ed. note immediately following.*]

[*ED. NOTE.*—The first two paragraphs of the above telegram form the last section of Sir F. Bertie's telegram No. 164, D. October 4, R. October 5. (F.O. 38930/30691/11/44) The earlier part of this telegram records an interview with M. de Selves in which Sir F. Bertie was informed of a conversation between M. de Selves and Rifaat Pasha which had taken place on October 3. In the course of it the possibility was suggested of the Porte's acceptance of an Italian occupation and administration of Tripoli, leaving the suzerainty to the Sultan. Upon this point Sir A. Nicolson wrote the following minute :—

MINUTE.

It is quite possible, I should think, that Italy would be content to be confirmed in Tripoli in return for a shadowy recognition of the Sultan's suzerainty—though when she has installed herself she may not even admit the suzerainty whatever she may say now. But would Turkey accept such a solution? I much doubt it. She could adopt the attitude of a passive resister—boycott Italian commerce, turn out Italian subjects, denounce all treaties with Italy, possibly intrigue with the Senoussi to render Italy's stay unpleasant in Tripoli—and sit tight. This attitude she could comfortably maintain for any length of time. As to Turkey's possible attitude see Sir G. Lowther's tel. No. 236 (annexed to this paper) which gives the views of a wise moderate veteran. If he holds these views we may be sure the younger and less cool heads could go further. Instead of telegraphing a reply to Sir F. Bertie perhaps the situation as depicted by M. de Selves could be discussed with Cambon.

A. N.

Sir G. Lowther's telegram No. 236, D. October 4, 9-0 P.M., R. October 5, 8-0 A.M. (F.O. 39009/30691/11/44), referred to in Sir A. Nicolson's minute, reports a conversation between Mr. Ryan and Kiamil Pasha. The following extract is relevant to the present subject :—

" Kiamil Pasha thought that the Government must exhaust all the available means of resistance in order to cover its responsibility in the eyes of the public. All Italian subjects should be expelled which would be justified by abnormal and wanton conduct of Italy. He admits that it is too late for intervention and too soon for mediation. He cannot understand England and France tolerating Italy's encroachment and is very bitter against Germany which promotes territorial ambition of its allies for its own aggrandisement. He declares that pecuniary compensation as a basis for discussion is out of the question. He feels that Italian Government must have consulted Germany and perhaps sounded the other Powers. He builds hopes on native resistance to the Italians when they proceed with the occupation.

Ryan gave Kiamil no encouragement to look for English intervention."]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 39201/30691/11/44.

(No. 415.)

Sir:—

Foreign Office, October 5, 1911.

The French Ambassador showed me what Monsieur de Selves had said to the Turkish Ambassador at Paris in reply to the Turkish appeal for intervention or mediation. He then told me Monsieur de Selves wished to concert with Russia and ourselves what suggestion might be made at Constantinople to put an end to the conflict. I replied that I would gladly consider any suggestion that M. de Selves thought might be made but the Italians having informed us and everybody that it was out of the question for them to abandon Tripoli I did not see what suggestion of any use could be made at Constantinople except one based on the abandonment of Tripoli by Turkey. The Turks would not accept this suggestion it would produce no effect on the conflict, and the Turks would resent our having given it. I observed also that there was no Cabinet at Constantinople, and apparently no Government in authority which could take upon itself to accept the suggestion if we made it. Monsieur Cambon admitted that the difficulties were great. He asked me whether I had had any idea beforehand of the step which the Italians were intending. I replied that I had assumed from Italian complaints that the Turks had for some time been doing everything to thrust Italian interests out of Tripoli, that I had expected the Italians to make a strong protest at Constantinople accompanied by threats and possibly a naval demonstration but till it actually occurred I had never supposed that they would issue a twenty-four-hour ultimatum and follow it immediately by a declaration of war.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY.]

Minute by Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 39166/30691/11/44.

Sir Edward Grey,

Foreign Office, October 5, 1911.

M. Cambon told me yesterday that he had, when at Paris last week, seen M. Bompard, who was on the point of returning to his post at Constantinople. M. Bompard had said that on several occasions he had intimated to Hakki Pasha the increasing irritation in Italy at the manner in which the Italian grievances in respect to the treatment of Italian interests in Tripoli had been disregarded by the Porte. Hakki Pasha had always dismissed the matter in a contemptuous manner, and had given M. Bompard to understand that he considered Italy as a negligible quantity.

On the day on which the Italian ultimatum was delivered, the Italian Chargé d'Affaires had acquainted the French Ch[argé] d'Aff[aires]s with its contents, and mentioned that he was on his way to the Porte to deliver it. The French Ch[argé] d'Aff[aires] was admitted to Hakki Pasha before the Italian Ch[argé] d'Aff[aires]s, and had hinted to Hakki Pasha that possibly the patience of Italy might soon be exhausted and that he understood that the Italian Ch[argé] d'Aff[aires]s was waiting in the ante-room with an important communication. Hakki Pasha had laughed and remarked that Turkey had nothing to fear from Italy as owing to the good relations

between the Turkish and German Gov[ernmen]ts, Germany would keep Italy in order and prevent her from taking any serious action.

When the Italian Ch[argé] d'Aff[aire]s was admitted and presented his paper Hakki Pasha put it on one side observing that it probably contained a reiteration of the old complaints and that he would read it later. The Ch[argé] d'Aff[aire]s observed that perhaps His Highness had better read it at once. Hakki Pasha at first declined saying that the matter did not press, and 'it was only on further insistence on the part of the Ch[argé] d'Aff[aire]s that he consented to read it and was surprised at its tenour.

A. N.
E. G.

No. 275.

Minute by Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 40108/30691/11/44.

Sir Edward Grey,

Foreign Office, October 6, 1911.

M. Cambon reverted to the question of German acquiescence in Italian action. He said that on Sept[ember] 18, M. Louis had telegraphed from St. Petersburg that M. Neratof had informed him that the German Gov[ernmen]t were expressing sympathy with Italian grievances in Tripoli, and that he considered such goodwill was exhibited in order to gain Italy's gratitude, as Germany, in view of possible conflicts with France, was anxious to secure the friendship of Italy. Of course this was before any question of ultimatum or occupation, but M. Cambon regards it as an indication in a measure confirmatory of Tewfik Pasha's "positive information." From a remark C[oun]t Benckendorff let drop I gathered he considered Italy had obtained the acquiescence of Germany.

A. N.
E. G.

No. 276.

Lord Granville to Sir Edward Grey.

Berlin, October 9, 1911.

F.O. 39685/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 83.)

D. 1.40 P.M.

R. 2.50 P.M.

Tripoli.

S[ecretary] of S[tate] for Foreign Affairs showed French Ambassador yesterday text of new Turkish request for mediation on basis of Italian and Turkish interests and suzerainty of Sultan. German Ambassadors to Great Powers instructed to ask for support in proposing armistice as soon as Italian expeditionary force has landed in Tripoli on terms of Italian occupation of town of Tripoli and strip of surrounding country; Turkish and Italian plenipotentiaries to meet on neutral ground and discuss terms of peace on above bases. In conversation S[ecretary] of S[tate] for Foreign Affairs expressed his belief that England, on account of her trade which is injured by extinction of lights, and Russia, on account of her export of grain, would be glad to join in measures likely to bring about peace. He mentioned Malta as likely meeting place.

Confidential. French Ambassador in telegraphing above last night urged French M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs], while no doubt reserving definite reply till he had learnt British and Russian views, to receive German Ambassador's communication in a friendly and favourable spirit with a view to good effect on Franco-German negotiations.

MINUTES

I don't think we should answer this without consulting France and Russia first.

It does not look as if Turkey would for a moment look at such a proposal yet, and we do not know whether Italy would consent to such a curtailment of her demands.

I should temporize and wait for French and Russian views and endeavour to ascertain whether Italy is privy to this proposal.

If there is truth in the story that Germany knew and approved of Italy's action, the 2 countries may still be collaborating. A direct refusal would lay us open to the charge of wishing the war to continue but, with our present knowledge, I should be very reluctant to join.

The Germans want to get kudos for bringing hostilities to an end, but don't want to risk anything by failing and for this reason propose to include all the Powers.

L. M.

C[oun]t Metternich asked me to-day if we had received a communic[at]io[n] from the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t. I said that we had, and that Tewfik P[ash]a had told me it was a circular—it seemed to me rather a vague proposal. C[oun]t Metternich observed that his Gov[ernmen]t wished to know if we, *conjointly with Germany*, would "sound" Rome. I replied that I presumed we w[oul]d first ascertain from other Gov[ernmen]ts what their views were as I understood it had gone to all the capitals. Perhaps we might *all* sound Rome. I enquired if he had any proposals to make from his Gov[ernmen]t. He replied in the negative beyond what he had told me. I asked if he had any idea what Italy w[oul]d say. He replied in the negative. I told him I had sent the Turkish communic[at]io[n] to you, and I daresay I c[oul]d ascertain your views by Wednesday.⁽¹⁾

A. N.

Bring up on my return tomorrow.

E. G.

10.10.11.

⁽¹⁾ [The information contained in the above minute by Sir A. Nicolson was communicated to Lord Granville in Sir Edward Grey's despatch No. 237 of October 23, 1911. (F O. 39685/30691/11/44.)]

No. 277.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Vienna, October 11, 1911.

F.O. 40005/30691/11/44.

D. 8.20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 106.) Very Confidential.

R. 10.30 P.M.

Tripoli.

Count von Aehrenthal, who was in better spirits than when I last saw him, spoke to me to-day of the war. He blamed the Italian Government severely for not having given the Powers an opportunity of intervening before the outbreak of hostilities. He declared to me that the incidents in the Adriatic had been very disquieting, and that he had been compelled to make strong representations at Rome on the subject.⁽²⁾ Italian Government had now given him assurances that these incidents would not recur, and he had accepted these assurances in perfect good faith.

With regard to intervention he spoke vaguely, but he did not seem to despair of the possibility of arriving at a solution of the Tripoli question on the lines of occupation of Bosnia by Austria. I enquired of Count von Aehrenthal whether he had heard a rumour that Italy might shortly inform the Powers that she had conquered Tripoli and had annexed it to the Kingdom of Italy. His Excellency replied that such a rumour was current, but he thought that it would be most deplorable if Italy acted in this way, as it would drive the Turks to desperation, and would indefinitely defer termination of war.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [cp. *O.-U.A.*, III, p. 425, No. 2744.]

Count von Aehrenthal said that his information went to show that great effervescence existed in Albania, but he thought that Italian action along the coast had caused the Mussulman population of Albania to rally to the side of Turkey. I do not believe that he was quite sincere in what he said to me.

Count von Aehrenthal showed much anxiety as to state of affairs in Turkey. He seems to me to anticipate with alarm a break-down at Constantinople. He has no love for the Young Turk Committee, but he said to me to-day that they seemed to be the only organised force left in Turkey. If they disappeared in the present crisis, he foresaw chaos at Constantinople. He spoke with regret of refusal of Turkish Ambassador here to take up the post of Minister for Foreign Affairs, and does not seem to like the appointment of Assim Bey.

The impression left on my mind from my conversation with Count von Aehrenthal is that he will welcome any steps which may lead to a prompt restoration of peace, for he seems to anticipate great complications in the Balkans if war is allowed to continue for an indefinite period.

MINUTE.

Para. 2. Italian Ambassador here says "Italy must possess Tripoli free from all Turkish rights whatsoever."

R. P. M.
L. M.
A. N.
E. G.

No. 278.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 40184/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 204.)

Foreign Office, October 11, 1911.

Following from Berlin, No. 85 of 10th October :—⁽²⁾

"Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs spoke to me this evening about Turkish request for mediation. He had instructed German Ambassador at Rome to try semi-officially and confidentially to bring Italian Government to the idea of themselves proposing an armistice by terms of which they should occupy Tripoli and a strip of surrounding country, with right of bringing their troops, while all operations should cease elsewhere. Turkey had asked that in the event of an armistice diplomatic relations should be resumed; this appeared to Secretary of State impossible, but plenipotentiaries might meet in a neutral half-way place "such as Athens." I asked him if he had made any proposals of this nature to other Governments, and he replied in the negative, but he requested me to suggest to you to take similar steps at Rome."

It does not seem possible to propose this till we know Italian view on the general question of mediation.

⁽¹⁾ [The despatch of this telegram was notified to Lord Granville in Sir Edward Grey's telegram No. 197 of October 11, 1911. (F.O. 40184/30691/11/44.)]

⁽²⁾ [Lord Granville to Sir Edward Grey, telegram No. 85 of October 10, 1911, D. 7.58 p.m., R. 9.15 p.m. (F.O. 39885/30691/11/44). It contains in addition to the above paragraph a statement that Herr von Kiderlen-Waechter was "very nervous of internal troubles in Turkey" and therefore particularly anxious for an armistice.]

No. 279.

Sir Edward Grey to Lord Granville.

F.O. 40184/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 198.)

*Foreign Office, October 11, 1911.*My telegram No. [204] to Sir R. Rodd repeated to you.⁽¹⁾

You should inform M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs], and say that until Italian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] has stated the ground on which he would accept mediation it does not seem possible to make any concrete proposal to him, especially as terms suggested for armistice are not consistent with what Italians have previously demanded as minimum.

(1) [v. immediately preceding document]

No. 280.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 40186/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 209.)

Foreign Office, October 11, 1911.

I have told Italian Ambassador of instructions sent to Sir G. Lowther and to yourself respecting mediation. Ambassador is very emphatic in giving his personal view that Italy must possess Tripoli free from all Turkish rights whatever: that if Turkey accepts this at once Italy will give compensation moral and material, but if war is prolonged and Italians expelled from Turkey no compensation at all will be given by Italy. You should when you see M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] inform him of what Ambassador has said to me, and you should abstain from making any suggestion, as my desire is to ascertain facts and not to make proposals that are sure to be futile and unacceptable.

(1) [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 260); to Berlin (No. 203); to Vienna (No. 121); to Cairo (No. 38); to St. Petersburg (No. 602); to Constantinople (No. 372)]

(2) [For Sir F. Cartwright's *aide-mémoire* of October 12 to the Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, v. O.-U.A., III, p. 426, No. 2745.]

No. 281.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 40185/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 368.)

Foreign Office, October 11, 1911.

You should tell M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs], in reply to last Turkish request for mediation, that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] would be very willing to co-operate with other Powers to whom Turkish request has been addressed in any efforts to secure peace between Italy and Turkey; but that in order to have some base on which mediation can be founded it will be necessary to have more precise information as to the terms that Turkey would accept so that we may ascertain whether there is sufficient rapprochement between the views of the Turkish and Italian G[overnments] to offer any prospect of an arrangement.

(1) [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 256); to Berlin (No. 199); to St. Petersburg (No. 598); to Rome (No. 205); to Vienna (No. 117) (with instructions to inform respective Ministers for Foreign Affairs of substance, and ask what they were doing and their views); and to Cairo (No. 84) (for information).]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.

F.O. 40481/30691/11/44.

(No 162.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 11, 1911.

The Italian Ambassador informed me to-day that, for the purposes of the war, his Government would naturally like to overthrow the Turkish Fleet in the Red Sea and all Turkish transports. This would not only have a great moral effect, but it would also remove all danger of Turkish troops being transferred from the Yemen to the Tripolitaine. No doubt the Tripolitaine was blockaded by the Italian Fleet, but there was a long line of coast, attempts might be made to force the blockade, and even if they were unsuccessful the prospect of them would increase the strain on the Italian Fleet, and necessitate a larger force being kept for the blockade when the Italian Government might wish to have some of their ships spared to protect their interests elsewhere. But the sincere friendship of Italy for Great Britain made her wish to meet our desire that the Red Sea should be kept free for commerce. The Italian Government were therefore prepared to agree to the neutralisation of the Red Sea on certain conditions, as to which he handed me the accompanying memorandum.

He asked me, however, that when I approached the Turks I should do so in such a way as not to prejudice Italy's position in the matter. I understood him to mean that he wished me to avoid giving the impression at Constantinople that it was Italy who was making the proposal in her own interest, lest this should be taken as a sign of weakness.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

Enclosure in No. 282.

Memorandum.

(Translation.)

No operations of war would be carried out in that sea either on our part or on that of Turkey and the lights would be lit there.

Turkey would have to undertake as a condition sine qua non not to carry out any transport of troops, arms and ammunition in that sea in any direction in order that they may not enter the Mediterranean either by the Suez Canal or by the Hejaz Railway or by any other route; and not to allow the departure from that sea towards the north of any warship or military transport even if empty.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson.

British Embassy, Vienna, October 12, 1911.

. . . .⁽²⁾ I think that the Tripoli adventure came as a complete surprise to Aehrenthal, and this may explain his fury during the days following the presentation of Italy's ultimatum to Turkey. No doubt Tittoni had obtained from Aehrenthal at the time of the Bosnian crisis assurances that Austria would make no opposition to Italy putting her hand upon Tripoli whenever it was convenient for her to do so. At that time, you will remember, Austria was at daggers drawn with Turkey and so felt indifferent as to the ultimate fate of one of her provinces. The precipitancy of Italian action in Tripoli, however, greatly disconcerted Aehrenthal; he felt that

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. V. of 1911.]

⁽²⁾ [The first few paragraphs of this letter deal in detail with Count von Aehrenthal's indignation concerning the Italian ultimatum to Turkey.]

he had been done by his friend San Giuliano, just as he—Aehrenthal—had done his friend Isvolsky over the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Aehrenthal, however, having more self-control than the Russian statesman, has done nothing in public to allow his resentment against San Giuliano to transpire. Aehrenthal places the interests of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy far above his own personal feelings, and in that he seems to me to show greater statesmanlike qualities than Isvolsky. Aehrenthal's efforts will now be concentrated in maintaining the most cordial relations between the Dual Monarchy and Italy, which were on the verge of being seriously disturbed by the incidents in the Adriatic. . . .⁽³⁾

Yours truly,

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

⁽³⁾ [The remaining paragraphs are concerned chiefly with the attitude of the Archduke Heir Apparent, and of the press in Italy.]

No. 284.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 40794/40794/11/44.

Therapia, D. October 16, 1911, 9 P.M.

Tel. (No. 278.) Confidential.

R. October 17, 1911, 8 A.M.

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] states that report has reached the Turkish Gov[ernment] that the Russian Gov[ernment] may seize this moment to raise the question of the Straits for Russian men of war. M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] asks whether H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] can say whether they have any reason to believe the truth of the rumour and if true to what extent the Turkish Gov[ernment] could rely on the assistance of the British Gov[ernment] in resistance.⁽¹⁾

I could not get M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] to say whether it was anything beyond a newspaper report that had reached the Turkish Gov[ernment].

MINUTE.

It will be well to have ready for reference what passed about the Straits when Isvolsky was in London—both the promise given to Isvolsky and what we said to the Turks who perpetually enquired about it.⁽²⁾

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. infra*, p. 329, No. 319.]

⁽²⁾ [Sir Edward Grey's memorandum of October 14, 1908, is given in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, p. 441, No. 377. *cp. also ib.*, pp. 451-2, No. 387; p. 456, No. 394; pp. 468-9, No. 409 (b). For the statement made at the time to the Turkish Ambassador, *v. ib.*, p. 448, No. 388. *cp. infra*, p. 311, *Ed. note.*]

No. 285.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 40782/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 387.)

Foreign Office, October 16, 1911.

(Tripoli. Question of intervention.)

You will doubtless keep in constant touch and free communication with your Russian colleague as you are already doing with your French colleague. Russian Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs is anxious that the three Embassies should cooperate closely.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 268); to St. Petersburg (No. 621).]

⁽²⁾ [Count Benckendorff saw Sir A. Nicolson on the 14th and made a statement to him to the above effect. Sir A. Nicolson wrote a minute to Sir Edward Grey upon the subject, suggesting that the above telegram should be sent.]

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

Private and Confidential.⁽¹⁾

My dear Sir Edward,

Rome, October 16, 1911.

The French Ambassador who returned a few days ago told me that the French Government had now communicated to you the text of the arrangement which he concluded with Prinetti, the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1902, by which Italy contracted out of her obligations under the Triple Alliance, in so far as she undertook not to join in hostilities against France, if France were attacked by her allies, or even if France were compelled herself to attack them by a provocation which she could not ignore.⁽²⁾ I have not myself seen the text, which was, I understand, annexed, to, or embodied in, the engagement of reciprocal disinterestedness regarding Morocco on the one side and Tripoli on the other. But I have more than once in private letters referred to this document as existing and my guesses at truth are shown to have been justified by what Barrère has just told me.

I also communicated in a private letter to Hardinge (on the 22nd of March 1909)⁽³⁾ some information which came to me in a very confidential manner, but which was undoubtedly authentic, to the effect that when the Duke of Sermoneta was Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1895 and the question of the renewal of the Triple Alliance was under discussion, he endeavoured to obtain as a condition of Italy's continued adherence a clause making it plain that Italy should not under any circumstances be involved in a war with England.⁽⁴⁾ His proposal was, as I reported, violently resented in Germany and the Duke would therefore have preferred not to renew, but I was informed that King Humbert insisted on renewal.

Sermoneta's attempt to contract out as far as we are concerned was however frankly submitted to Germany, whereas Barrère's arrangement with Prinetti was secret and Germany and Austria do not, or are not supposed to, know of its existence. I have also heard it maintained that while Barrère and Prinetti were known to have concluded some form of arrangement, the text never received the King's sanction. Against this may be urged that at the time there was an exchange of high decorations, but so far as the King's cognizance is concerned, it might have been limited to the Morocco-Tripoli arrangement, which would have justified the decorations without the further secret clause. On the whole, however, I am sceptical about the story of its having been withheld from the King, since soon after the date of the negotiations the Italians began to neglect their northwestern frontier and transferred all their energies to the North East. I did not like at the moment to put the question directly to Barrère, but I may have an opportunity of finding out.

The question now arises whether, if a propitious occasion should occur, we ought not to try and obtain a similar understanding with Italy. I confess in putting forward such an idea, that I cannot at present pretend to suggest how it should be approached. I do not suppose the French Government would like it to be known that we are aware of the existence of this secret understanding, so we probably could not appeal to it as a precedent. Opportunities however sometimes arise when one least expects them, and I think the time is not far distant when the self-denying "modus vivendi" between Italy and Austria regarding Albania will be difficult to maintain. We have seen how sensitive Austria has been to any Italian naval evolutions on the Albanian coast, and whatever their official attitude may be, there is no doubt that the agents of both countries are competing with one another to establish influence and create a lien on the sympathies of the local populations. It is quite conceivable that their alliance may not stand the strain of the next "opportunity" on the eastern side of the Adriatic.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 25.]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 28, No. 24, *min.* and *note* (2).]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced, as the letter cannot be traced.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*cp. Pribram*, Vol. II, pp. 106-13. The proposal is there described as having been made in March 1896.]

I do not think that the powers that be in Italy at the present time would regard the question of contracting out in our favour with the same distinterestedness as did the Duke of Sermoneta, whose English sympathies are very strong, but at the same time if the question were to arise I do not think King Victor Emmanuel would throw his influence into the opposite scale as King Humbert apparently did. As things are now, an overt proposal of Italy to her allies to allow her to contract out in our favour would no doubt mean the end of the Triple Alliance as far as she is concerned. Whether a secret arrangement is possible, I cannot say at present, but it is of no use contemplating methods or watching for opportunities, unless the object be regarded as desirable in itself. My reason for bringing the question up at the present time is the feeling that the Italian annexation of Tripoli may considerably alter the position in the Mediterranean at no very distant date, though Ministers here brush away any reference to Tobruk as though they were quite outside the range of practical consideration.

Very sincerely yours,
 RENNELL RODD.

No. 287.

Minutes by Sir A. Nicolson and Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 42578/80691/11/44.

Sir Edward Grey.

Foreign Office, October 16, 1911.

The Turkish Ambass[ado]r said that he wished to speak to me quite unofficially on the question of mediation. He need not tell me that "others" were very active at Constantinople in the matter, but he was sure that the Gov[ernmen]t and the bulk of public opinion would far prefer if G[rea]t Britain were to undertake the task of bringing about an arrangement between Turkey and Italy—especially as more attention would be paid at Rome to any suggestions from England than to proposals emanating from other Powers. (I did not tell Tewfik P[ash]a that at Rome they considered that Germany had a prior claim to mediate.) He considered that it would be much welcomed if Sir G. Lowther were in a friendly and unofficial manner to suggest to the Porte what line it would be advisable for the Ottoman Gov[ernmen]t to follow in regard to a settlement of the conflict. It was no use disguising the fact that Italy could not relinquish Tripoli, though it was equally clear that she had a very big task ahead of her for the complete subjection of the vilayet. If the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t could save appearances by some recognition of the Sultan's suzerainty and perhaps certain compensations Tewfik Pasha thought that his Gov[ernmen]t would be ready to negotiate on such bases with Italy. Suzerainty he said was merely a phrase, and would not in any way restrict the liberty of action of Italy in Tripoli. If an arrangement between Turkey and Italy were reached, the Arab tribes in the interior would lose heart and not prolong a struggle, and all the dangers of complications in Europe would be avoided.

I told Tewfik P[ash]a that I would transmit to you what he had said, but that it seemed a matter of some doubt what Gov[ernmen]t would be in favour at Constantinople during the coming week. He agreed to this. Moreover I had some doubts as to whether Italy could accept suzerainty in any form. However what he had said would be carefully considered. There would be no advantage in taking any steps at present, as the situation at Constantinople is so obscure—and while the Italians are in the heyday of initial successes and have not felt the pinch at all. They may later be more disposed to listen to proposals for a recognition of the establishment of their authority in the vilayet in return for an admission of the nominal suzerainty of the Sultan.

A. N.

There must first of all be some evidence of a stable Gov[ernmen]t at Constantinople that is ready to receive suggestions. Then I think Sir G. Lowther might be instructed to say unofficially that Italy will not retire from Tripoli and that the only basis on which negotiations can be opened is the compensation that Italy may be prepared to pay for the possession of Tripoli. Whether this compensation might be nominally a tribute would be a point to be ascertained.

F. G.

No. 288.

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey.

Sofia, October 17, 1911.

D. 5.4 P.M.

R. 5.10 P.M.

F.O. 40968/39697/11/7.

Tel. (No. 25.)

My telegram No. 24.⁽¹⁾

Bulgarian minister at Constantinople has reported to his government that Turkish M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] informs him that all movements of troops on the frontier will be at once stopped and that actual status quo will be maintained.

This news will be made public here to-day.

Meanwhile Bulgarian consul at Adrianople reported in a somewhat unfavourable sense as to movements in vilayet of Adrianople.

I am of the opinion that action by Bulgarian government will depend more upon internal intrigues than on the actual state of things in European Turkey.

Sent to Constantinople.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. Sir H. Bax-Ironside referred in this telegram to the proposal that the Great Powers should guarantee the sincerity of the assurances of the Porte, and stated that Bulgaria would wait for the decision of the Powers upon this point before mobilising. (F.O. 40521/39697/11/44.)]

[*ED. NOTE.*—The conversation between Sir A. Nicolson and M. Paul Cambon of October 20, 1911 (v. immediately succeeding document), followed one on the 18th in which Sir A. Nicolson was informed that Count Benckendorff had been instructed to raise the question of the Straits. Sir A. Nicolson recorded this in a minute to Sir Edward Grey which led the latter to ask to "see what was recorded about the straits on the occasion of M. Isvolsky's visit to London." In a subsequent minute Sir Edward Grey wrote: "I notice that the letter that I wrote to M. Isvolsky of which I retrieved a copy from Count Benckendorff (it could not be found in the F[oreign] O[ffice]) is not with these memoranda about the Straits. Please have a copy of the letter put with them. I desire never to see the memorandum without the letter." On October 25, a despatch, No. 441, Secret, was sent to Sir F. Bertie, enclosing copies of Sir Edward Grey's memorandum of October 14, 1908 (v. *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, p. 441, No. 377), and of the further memorandum of the same date which formed the basis of Sir Edward Grey's despatch to Sir A. Nicolson of October 19. (v. *ib.*, p. 456, No. 394, and *note* ⁽¹⁾.) The second memorandum is the draft mentioned in the note. With the exception of the opening words it is identical with the despatch. The private letter (v. *ib.*, pp. 451-2, No. 387) was not sent. Sir Edward Grey stated that he found that these papers had not been communicated at the time to the French Government and requested Sir F. Bertie to communicate them now to the Minister for Foreign Affairs for his confidential information. The papers were also communicated confidentially to the Director of Military Operations and to the Admiralty. (F.O. 42217/42217/11/44.)]

No. 289.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir E. Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

Foreign Office, October 20, 1911.

Cambon today gave me the following information which he begged should be kept private, until we heard something from Benckendorff or from Lowther.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS, Vol. V of 1911.]

Neratof told the French Ch[argé] d'Aff[aires] in St. Petersburg that he had instructed the Russian Ambass[ado]r at Constantinople (Tcharykoff) to discuss with Said P[ash]a a "réglement de fait" between Russia and Turkey as to the Straits, and that in return Russia would be prepared to guarantee Turkey's position at Const[antino]ple and in the "adjoining territories"—Neratof added that France would be consulted in regard to this. Isvolsky, as you will remember, did allude to the Straits quite recently at Paris, and told de Selves that Benckendorff would be instructed to speak here. This he has not done—and he told Cambon yesterday that he had received no instructions whatever. Isvolsky said nothing as to Russia guaranteeing Turkey's position, &c.

Now, and this is really important, Bompard on the 18th inst[ant] telegraphs from Const[antino]ple that Tcharykoff had been to see him—and had given him the following information.

On the 12th inst[ant] he Tcharykoff had seen Said Pasha and had given the latter *in writing* a D[ra]ft Convention. By this Convention the Russian Gov[ernmen]t engaged to give Turkey support for defending, against the attack of a third party, the Straits and the "adjoining territories"—and to enable Russia to carry out this engagement she must be allowed free passage of her ships through the Straits. Russia would renounce the arrangement of 1900 and replace it by another which would provide for the junction of the Anatolian and Transcaucasian railways—while Russia would grant the 4%—be ready to discuss abolition of capitulations, and would see that the status quo in the Balkans was maintained and that the minor States there remained in good relations with Turkey. Tcharykoff added that he had explained in the memo[randum] "la satisfaction que l'Angleterre et la France éprouveraient de l'union établie avec leur partenaire dans la Triple Entente et qui vaudrait à la Turquie l'appui décisif de l'Angleterre sur mer et le concours financier et industriel de la France pour le développement économique de la Turquie, &c."—I quote textually from Bompard's report. Bompard asked what Said P[ash]a had said. The latter had expressed his great satisfaction, and said he would keep the paper. The conversation was to be quite unofficial and private and Said P[ash]a said he would divulge what had passed to no one. He had told Said P[ash]a that France and England approved of the arrangement—and that Sir E. Grey (but this he told Bompard only) had approved in substance of it in a written communic[atio]n of June 1909. Bompard was absolutely taken back—so was Cambon—and so was Benckendorff to whom Cambon communicated the above.⁽²⁾

I jot down without comment what Cambon has told me—though Tcharykoff's extraordinary action calls for much comment. We can discuss it on Monday.

Yours sincerely,
A. NICOLSON.

(²) [*cp. infra*, pp. 320–50. Nos. 303–48, *passim*.]

No. 290.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, October 23, 1911.

F.O. 41848/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 118.)

D. 7.50 P.M.

R. 8.40 P.M.

Count von Aehrenthal sent for me to-day and made the following communication, which he has also made to my French and Russian colleagues. He told me he had instructed Count Mensdorff to take your opinion on the advisability of the Cabinets of London, Paris, St. Petersburg, Berlin, and Vienna exchanging views with the object of seeing whether it is possible for them to agree on some plan of common action which, when an opportune moment shall present itself, may lead to joint action at Rome and Constantinople. Count von Aehrenthal seems to think that mere fact

of the five Powers discussing the situation in a friendly manner would have a reassuring effect on public opinion in Europe, and might also induce the belligerents to show themselves more amenable to reason on the subject of peace terms. In spite of declaration of Italian Ambassador to Count von Aehrenthal that Italy would only accept absolute annexation, the latter, I expect, still hopes that under unanimous pressure from the five Powers Italy might admit nominal suzerainty of the Sultan over Tripoli.

Count von Aehrenthal told me he was doing his utmost to keep the Balkan States quiet, but that all the measures he might take would not cure the present unrest in the Balkans so long as war continued.⁽¹⁾

MINUTES.

It would be best to consult Petersburg and Paris before moving.

L. M.

A. N.

I have dealt with this in conversation with Count Mensdorff.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. infra*, p. 314, No. 294.]

No. 291.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 41947/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 688.)

Foreign Office, October 23, 1911, 8 P.M.

Russian Ambassador here informs me that Russian Ambassador at Constantinople has suggested personally to Grand Vizier a rapprochement with Turkey by which Russia should induce Balkan States to come to an agreement with Turkey on basis of status quo: Russia would guarantee possession of Constantinople to Turkey; Turkey would give Russian ships of war leave to pass out through the Straits. Acting M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] wanted to know if we would give support to negotiations on this basis at Constantinople.

I replied that I would support what I had promised to M. Iswolsky about the Straits three years ago with the consent of the Cabinet.⁽²⁾ More than that I would not say without consulting my colleagues.

I doubted our being willing to undertake any responsibility for guaranteeing Turkish territory. Russian Ambassador said he assumed a guarantee of territory would only be given after war between Turkey and Italy was over, otherwise it would be a breach of neutrality; he said what he had told me was strictly confidential except as regards French Gov[ernment].

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Constantinople (No. 393)]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 308, No. 284, note ⁽²⁾.]

No. 292.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther

F.O. 41947/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 394.)

Foreign Office, October 23, 1911, 8 P.M.

My immediately preceding telegram.⁽¹⁾

You may inform your Russian colleague in order to ascertain from him what he has said to Grand Vizier, whether he has given anything in writing and whether he has yet mentioned us in connection with it.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. immediately preceding document, and note* ⁽¹⁾.]

No. 298.

*Mr O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, October 24, 1911.*

F.O. 41996/30691/11/44.

D. 8.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 255.)

R. 8.40 P.M.

Your telegram No. 638.⁽¹⁾

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs told me to-day that the personal suggestion made by Russian Ambassador at Constantinople did not at all represent the settled policy of the Russian Government, who had not yet fully considered question. He did, however, think that present might be a convenient moment for raising the question of egress through the Straits with the Turkish Government.

Latter might feel apprehensive of a *coup de main* against Constantinople, and might be glad of a guarantee from Russia. He argued that Turkey's consent and also good-will of England and France were essential to any arrangement concerning the Straits.

He stated that Grand Vizier had not given any expression of his views in response to the Russian Ambassador's overtures.

(1) [*v. supra*, p. 313, No. 291.]

No. 294.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 42144/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 126.)

Foreign Office, October 24, 1911, 6 P.M.

Austrian Ambassador has spoken to me in sense of your telegram No. 113,⁽²⁾ explaining that the question appeared to Count Aehrenthal to be whether collective action could be taken to procure a settlement on the base laid down by Italy of purely a simple annexation of Tripoli.

I remarked that this must mean collective action at Constantinople; there could be no need of action at Rome to get Italy to accept her own base.

The Ambassador agreed, and said that collective action might make it easier for the Turks to accept.

I said that it would not do to give advice at Constantinople that was rejected, and I thought the first step should be for us each to ascertain from our Ambassadors at Constantinople their opinion as to Turkish feeling. The important point was whether the time was opportune for any collective action, and I asked whether Count Aehrenthal had formed an opinion on this. The Ambassador replied that he had not expressed an opinion.

I said generally that I was glad Count Aehrenthal had launched the idea of collective action; it might become fruitful, and it was useful to have it in our minds as an objective. I cordially agreed in Count Aehrenthal's desire, expressed to me by the Ambassador, to see the end of the war.

(1) [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 278); to Berlin (No. 211); to St. Petersburg (No. 642); to Rome (No. 223); to Constantinople (No. 395).]

(2) [*v. supra*, pp. 312-3, No. 290. *cp. also O.-U.A.*, III, p. 475, No. 2818.]

No. 295.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Constantinople, October 25, 1911.

F.O. 42048/30691/11/44.

D. 5 A.M.

Tel (No. 289.)

R. 11.15 A.M.

Your telegrams Nos. 393 and 394 yesterday.⁽²⁾

Russian Ambassador last Saturday gave the Grand Vizier proposal for a rapprochement in a confidential and personal letter which so far does not commit his Government. On its receipt Grand Vizier promised a reply in two weeks unless obstacles should in the meantime intervene which Russian Ambassador takes to mean unless Germany is successful in her mediation with Italy. Russian Ambassador does not think Grand Vizier has mentioned matter to any of his colleagues for fear of its reaching Committee and thence to German Ambassador. Proposals made are on lines indicated in your telegram No. 688 to St. Petersburg⁽³⁾ and there is a further proposal for Russia to abandon right to building railway-lines in Northern Anatolia on condition that an agreement is reached as to the places on frontier where Turkish and Russian lines should be linked up.

Russian Ambassador says the only way in which he has mentioned any foreign Power in connection with proposal is in reference to the consent of Powers that would be required for permission to pass the Straits. The suggestion is that such passage should be made without stopping.

MINUTES.

There is apparently no suggestion that we should enter into any guarantee.

L. M.

The last para[graph] is in direct contradiction with what we have heard.

A. N.

E. G.

(1) [This telegram was sent to St. Petersburg (as No. 644) and also sent to Paris in print. Copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

(2) [v. *supra*, p. 313, No. 291, and note (1), and No. 292.]

(3) [v. *supra*, p. 313, No. 291.]

No. 296.

*Sir Rennell Rodd to Sir Edward Grey*Private and Confidential.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward,

Rome October 25, 1911.

In continuation and extension of my private letter sent by the last messenger,⁽²⁾ I write to say that Barrère has since told me a good deal more about what took place in 1902 when he made the arrangement between France and Italy which has, I understood from him, now been communicated to you.⁽³⁾ He says that, in addition to the actual agreement, there was a further document which embodied what Prinetti told him about the Triple Alliance, and which he asked him to put on paper and communicate to the French Government. This was done and the document was handed to Monsieur Delcassé by Count Tornielli. I don't know whether you have seen this document. Its substance, according to Barrère, was to the effect that the Triple Alliance as then renewed was not aggressive in character, and contained nothing which should excite alarm or mistrust in France, and further that no military protocols stipulating special obligations were annexed to it. This Barrère maintains had not been the case in the original draft of the Triple Alliance. Prinetti also

(1) [Grey MSS, Vol. 25.]

(2) [v. *supra*, pp. 309-10, No. 286.]

(3) [cp. *infra*, p. 322, No. 308.]

assured him that the text had been drafted by men who knew their business, and that there were saving clauses—"échappements" was the word he used,—from which Barrère inferred that Italy was not to be bound if France was deliberately provoked by one of the allies. Italy, therefore, in making her contracting out arrangement with France, was able to undertake not to support her allies against France even if the latter declared war as the consequence of a provocation which she could not honourably ignore.

Barrère also told me that when Italy undertook the Tripoli expedition, San Giuliano had suggested that he should be authorized to communicate to Germany that part of the 1902 agreement which referred to Morocco and Tripoli. The general substance of this was known but not the exact terms. The French Government opposed this suggestion, as they did not wish to give Germany an opportunity for compromising them with Turkey, and also because they felt it would lead to questions from Germany as to whether the agreement did not contain further provisions. San Giuliano accepted this view as sound.

I could if you wished it embody what I have written to you in this and in my last private letter in an official despatch, but I have no idea how you are treating the communication made by the French Government⁽⁴⁾ and thought it better for the present only to refer to the matter privately.

As regards the question I tentatively mooted in my letter, the consideration of whether we should not now endeavour to obtain some similar assurance from Italy, the first difficulty that occurs to one is, what inducement we could have to offer. There might be a way of turning this difficulty by some form of tripartite agreement between England, France and Italy, for reciprocally guaranteeing their position in the Mediterranean. Something, I mean, of a rather more tangible character than the recent North Sea agreement. Tripoli will undoubtedly prove a serious responsibility to Italy, and will greatly add to her vulnerability, as well as contribute to her importance as a Mediterranean power, and an arrangement which would eliminate any menace to her new acquisition—I am writing as if it were a *fait accompli*—would no doubt offer an inducement to her to give us certain guarantees in return. Of course I am not regarding the Adriatic as the Mediterranean. That is another question.

Barrère, who revolves many political combinations in his subtle mind, and who is always engaged in planning how Italy can be withdrawn from the Triple Alliance, has, I know, an idea that the Adriatic is Russia's business, because it is of interest to Russia that a certain number of Austrian army corps should be involved on the Italian frontier, and therefore Russia might be induced to furnish Italy with a guarantee that an attack upon her in the Adriatic would bring Russia into action.

An agreement between the three Powers most interested in the Mediterranean and the North African coast—though nominally for Mediterranean purposes only—would take all the sting out of the Triple Alliance, as far as Italy is concerned, and would put an end to all the talk about Malta as an object of irredentism, with which the "Morning Post" has, in my opinion rather unnecessarily, been concerning itself. One could expand this point of view considerably, but it is probably not necessary to do so.

In writing as I have done I am fully conscious that it is not my province to make suggestions or put forward policies and I should not think of doing so in an official despatch. But I have always held that representatives abroad can do no harm by privately putting forward any ideas which may suggest themselves and that at least such letters stimulate thought as to the considerations which may have weight in the opposing scale.

Very sincerely yours,
RENNELL RODD.

(4) [*cp. infra*, p. 322, No. 308.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 42152/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 127.)

Foreign Office, October 26, 1911, 2 P.M

Your telegram No. 115.⁽¹⁾

It is important not to say anything that may be used to misrepresent us as having suggested bringing pressure to bear at Rome. I particularly wish to avoid taking initiative of bringing pressure to bear either at Rome or Constantinople, though I sympathize with Count Aehrenthal's desire that five Powers should keep in touch and shall co-operate therewith.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It reported a conversation with Count von Aehrenthal, and his approval of Sir Edward Grey's suggestion that the Ambassadors at Constantinople should "watch for an opportune moment when mediation might become possible." (F.O. 42152/30691/11/44.)]

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Carnegie.

F.O. 42895/30691/11/44.

(No. 453.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 26, 1911.

I asked M. Cambon to-day what was the opinion of M. de Selves about the Russian Ambassador's proposals at Constantinople respecting the Straits, &c. I told him that we were pledged to support negotiations about the Straits on the lines which I had laid down with M. Iswolsky three years ago.⁽¹⁾ I would let him have a copy of what passed with M. Iswolsky.

M. Cambon quoted Tewfik Pasha as having said that Turkey could not really make an *entente* with a third Power while she was at war, without its being a breach of neutrality on the part of the third Power.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [cp. *supra*, p. 308, No. 284, note ⁽²⁾, and p. 311, *Ed. note*.]

[*ED. NOTE.*—For the Turkish overture to Great Britain of October 31, 1911, and Sir Edward Grey's reply, v. *infra*, pp. 779–81, App IV.]

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 43538/30691/11/44.

(No. 492.) Very Confidential.

Paris, D. November 2, 1911.

Sir,

R. November 4, 1911.

Monsieur de Selves mentioned to me to-day the question of Tripoli.

His Excellency asked whether I thought that Italy was inclined to an abandonment of her connection with the Triple Alliance.

I said that I doubted her doing so for the present. Though she might feel resentment at the double dealing of Germany and the tone of the German Press, and irritation against Austria at the objections made by Count d'Aehrenthal to some of her operations, she was much too much afraid of Austria to desert her and Germany at

present. Unfortunately, the English Press and a portion of the French Press had begun an atrocities campaign against the Italian troops which had caused great resentment in Italy. Monsieur de Selves observed that unfortunately there could be no doubt that there had been some indiscriminate massacres.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIF.

No. 300.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 43987/30691/11/44.

Vienna, D. November 6, 1911, 10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 120.)

R. November 7, 1911, 7.8 A.M.

Tripoli.

I have seen Count Aehrenthal this afternoon, and enquired of him what he thought of the Italian notification of annexation. He blamed it as a step likely to lead to complications. He thought that it was premature and, as Italians could scarcely be said to be as yet in possession of the country, legally unjustifiable. As the Powers had declared their neutrality, they could not give their consent to action of Italy. The effect of Italian proclamation in Turkey would be bad, and would indefinitely postpone conclusion of peace, as ten days ago Turkish Government had informed him that, if Italy proclaimed annexation, they would address remonstrance to the Powers, and declare that they would never officially renounce suzerain rights over Tripoli.

Count Aehrenthal's information led him to expect that the Turkish Government will now proceed to expulsion of Italians from Ottoman dominions.

Count Aehrenthal infers from last sentence of Italian communication that Italy intends to carry war into the Aegean Sea. In his opinion this would be most unfortunate, and might lead to serious complications between Italy and the Powers. He reminded me that during the Bosnian annexation crisis Austria-Hungary was sorely tempted to bring pressure on Turkey by sea, but abstained from doing so out of consideration for the Powers.

Count Aehrenthal told me that he had received a long protest against reputed Italian atrocities in Tripoli. He did not intend to reply to it, as to do so might irritate Italy, and it was impossible to verify accuracy of statements made in it.

MINUTE.

We have asked the other Powers for their views.

R. P. M.
A. N.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 301.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd

F.O. 44278/30691/11/44.

(No. 179.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 6, 1911.

The Italian Ambassador announced to me to-day the annexation of Tripoli by Italy, and at my request left me a copy of the following telegram:

(See paper annexed.)

I told him that I had not expected the announcement so soon. I must consult with other Powers as to whether international Treaties were involved; and I must also examine British Treaty rights, especially commercial, to see how they were affected.

As I mentioned the Treaty of 1856, the Ambassador said that surely it had been superseded by the Treaty of Berlin, which in turn had disappeared owing to the action of Austria three years ago.

I answered that the Treaty of Berlin had been modified then in one or two respects; but we could not, as a single Power, regard an international Treaty such as that of 1856 as having been abrogated without communication with other Powers.

The Ambassador said that he was sure, with regard to commercial rights, that his Government would meet us in every way. The Capitulations, of course, disappeared with annexation.

I replied that I must examine all our Treaty rights: I was obliged to mention them all now in order that I might not be charged with unfairness if I put them forward later on.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

Enclosure in No. 301.

*Telegram communicated by the Italian Ambassador.**Roma, li 5 Novembre, 1911.*

L'occupazione delle principali città della Tripolitania e Cirenaica, i costanti successi delle nostre armi, le forze preponderanti che abbiamo colà riunite e le altre che ci apprestiamo ad inviarvi, hanno reso inefficace e vana ogni ulteriore resistenza della Turchia.

D'altra parte per porre fine ad un inutile spargimento di sangue, urge di togliere dall'animo di quelle popolazioni ogni pericolosa incertezza. Perciò con odierno Decreto Reale la Tripolitania e la Cirenaica sono state sottoposte definitivamente ed irrevocabilmente alla Sovranità piena ed intera del Regno d'Italia.

Qualunque altra soluzione meno radicale, che avesse lasciato anche un'ombra di Sovranità nominale del Sultano su quelle provincie, sarebbe stata una causa permanente di futuri conflitti tra l'Italia e la Turchia che avrebbero più tardi potuto scoppiare fatalmente, anche contro la volontà dei Governanti, in un momento ben altrimenti pericoloso per la Pace Europea.

La soluzione da noi adottata è l'unica che tuteli definitivamente gli interessi del l'Italia, del l'Europa e della Turchia stessa.

La Pace firmata su questa base eliminerà ogni causa di dissenso profondo tra l'Italia e la Turchia e noi potremo più facilmente ispirare tutta la nostra politica al grande interesse che abbiamo al mantenimento della statu quo territoriale nella Penisola Balcanica, di cui è condizione essenziale il consolidamento dell'Impero Ottomano.

Desideriamo perciò vivamente, qualora la condotta della Turchia non ce lo renda impossibile, che le condizioni di pace riescano quanto più si può confacenti ai suoi legittimi interessi ed al suo prestigio.

La Tripolitania e la Cirenaica hanno cessato di far parte dell'Impero Ottomano, ma noi siamo oggi disposti ad esaminare con largo spirito di conciliazione i mezzi di

regolare nel modo più conveniente ed onorevole per la Turchia le conseguenze dei fatti irrevocabilmente compiuti. Certo, noi non potremo mantenere tali propositi concilianti se essa si ostinasse a prolungare inutilmente la guerra; confidiamo, però, che l'opera concorde delle Grandi Potenze indurrà la Turchia a prendere senza indugio le savie et risolutive decisioni che rispondano ai suoi veri interessi ed a quelli di tutto il Mondo civile.

L'Italia in ogni modo coopererà a questo risultato col mostrarsi altrettanto disposta ad eque condizioni di pace quanto decisa ai mezzi più efficaci per imporla nel più breve termine possibile.

Vostra Eccellenza può rilasciare copia di questo telegramma a codesto Ministro degli Affari Esteri.

Roma, li 5 Novembre, 1911.

Fir[mato]

SAN GIULIANO.

No. 302.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Sir Edward,

Rome, November 6, 1911.

Following up the ideas mooted in my last private letter⁽²⁾ of a change in the Mediterranean frontier, brought about by recent events, I have a further item of information to record which points in the same direction. Signor Giolitti, the Prime Minister, the other day in talking to a friend of mine, an ex-diplomat, who repeated the conversation, said that henceforward Italy would have to be very careful not to alienate the goodwill of the two great Maritime powers in the Mediterranean, France and England, on which her position in Tripoli would make her much more dependent. This does not necessarily mean that he is actually contemplating the possibility of a withdrawal from the Triple Alliance, but it would seem to indicate that if Italy should renew, her continuance in the association with Germany and Austria-Hungary will be even more of a mere form than it has been in the past.

I seem to notice here a perpetual condition of tense anxiety lest the newspaper war which has been an unfortunate feature of the last month should contribute to some cooling of the traditional friendship between the two countries, a friendship of which Italy realises she stands just now more in need than ever.

Very sincerely yours,

RENNELL RODD.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 25.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 315-6, No. 296.]

III.—RUSSIA AND THE STRAITS (THE TCHARYKOV NEGOTIATIONS), NOVEMBER 6-DECEMBER 14, 1911.

[ED. NOTE.—v. G.P. XXX, I, Chapter 136, N. V. Tcharykow, *Glimpses of High Politics*, (London, 1931), Chapters 38-4, and D.D.F., 3^{me} Sér., Vol. I, where the references are given in the *Table méthodique*.]

No. 303.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 43935/30691/11/44.

Constantinople, D. November 6, 1911, 10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 303.)

R. November 7, 1911, 8 A.M.

My tel[egram] No. 289.⁽²⁾

Russian Ambassador sent on the 4th to enquire of Grand Vizier if his reply was ready.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to St. Petersburg (as No. 676).]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 315, No. 295.]

H[is] H[ighness] answered that he was consulting some of his political friends and asked for a little more time.

Russian Ambassador expresses himself as satisfied with this answer as it shows the possible obstacles, which (?) Grand Vizier insinuated, no longer exist and that as he is consulting his political friends he regards it as no longer private but within range of practical politics.

No. 304.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 44272/30691/11/44.

(No. 262.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 6, 1911.

Count Metternich observed to-day that it was reported in the Press that Russia had offered to guarantee Turkish possessions in Europe in return for an opening of the Straits to Russian ships only, and that we were supporting this offer. He said that he thought this could hardly be true.

I told him that, in 1908, I had promised M. Iswolsky not to oppose the opening of the Straits on fair conditions.⁽¹⁾ The question had slept since then; and I thought that, while war was going on, no Power could enter into fresh political relations of an intimate kind with one of the belligerents without a breach of neutrality.

Count Metternich remarked that Lord Salisbury had laid it down that, if the Straits were opened at all, they must be opened equally for every one.⁽²⁾

I said that our position was that we no longer contended that the Straits should be kept closed. The actual conditions on which they might be opened would, of course, be for discussion with the Powers.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 308, No. 284, note ⁽²⁾, and p. 311, *Ed. note*.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 774-6, *App. II*, where Lord Salisbury's statement of October 2, 1891, is given.]

No. 305.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

St. Petersburg, November 7, 1911.

F.O. 44181/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 267.)

D. 3-19 P.M.

R. 3-30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 688.⁽²⁾

Acting M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] informs me Grand Vizier has as yet made no response to Russian Ambassador's overtures. Acting M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] supposes that he has communicated them to Germany and Austria and is waiting to see what bid those Powers will make him.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Constantinople (as No. 412).]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 318, No. 291.]

No. 306.

Sir G. Louther to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Pera, November 7, 1911.

F.O. 44140/30691/11/44.

D. 4 P.M.

Tel. (No. 305.)

R. 6.30 P.M.

My Russian colleague tells me that Russian Ambassador at Rome has reported to his Government that Italian Government propose to attack the Dardanelles with a view to destroying Turkish fleet.

My Russian colleague does not believe that Turks have sufficient troops in the Gulf of Zeros to resist attack if made in full force, but supposes that European Powers would not allow such an attack, and is consequently disinclined to believe story.

According to our information Turkey now has about 11,000 men immediately available to defend Gulf of Zeros.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Rome (as No. 249) on November 10, copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence, to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 307.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

St. Petersburg, November 12, 1911.

F.O. 44772/30691/11/44.

D. 3.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 272.)

R. 4.15 P.M.

Sir G. Lowther's telegram No. 305.⁽²⁾

Italian Ambassador has intimated to Acting Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs that in any future measures to which Italy may resort she will refrain from operations against the Dardanelles or at other points where interests of other Powers are specially involved. Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs thinks Rhodes most likely Italian objective.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Constantinople (as No. 428); to Rome (as No. 252) and copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 308.

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.*Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Rodd,

Foreign Office, November 14, 1911.

We have not a copy of what we have been told very confidentially about the promise given by Italy to France.⁽²⁾

What Barrère told you is very interesting: but I think that it is more suitable for a private letter, and need not be put into an official despatch.

It will not be possible for us to make any agreement with Italy at this moment. Feeling here has been very much stirred by the accounts of massacres in Tripoli; the expression of this feeling in the British Press has annoyed the Italians; and the

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 25.]

⁽²⁾ [cp. *supra*, p. 28, No. 24, *min*, and *note* (2).]

feeling being what it is, I should not be justified in making overtures to Italy for any political understanding.

We cannot ask anything from Italy without implying a promise of support in her Tripoli venture: and that we cannot give. But your letter of October 25⁽³⁾ is very interesting, and I am glad to have both the information you give and the suggestions you make.

The Italians have been very foolish in putting out their foot so far in this Tripoli business; they had a fair case for squeezing guarantees for economic interests in Tripoli and the reversion of Tripoli out of the Turks. They could have got all that by this time, and come well out of the whole business.

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

I am so sorry to hear that you have not been well: it has been a trying year for Ambassador and Foreign Office.

E. G.

(³) [*v supra*, pp 315-6, No. 296.]

No. 309.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 45864/30691/11/44.

(No. 482.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 18, 1911.

The French Minister informed me on the 14th inst[ant]⁽¹⁾ that M. Iswolsky had written a private letter to M. de Selves, asking the French Government to undertake to recognise freedom of action for Russia in the territory neighbouring the Straits. M. de Selves wished to know whether any such request had been made to us.

I replied that we had not received this request, the terms of which were quite new to me. Count Benckendorff had spoken to me some time ago about the proposals of the Russian Ambassador in Constantinople: concerning the Straits, an arrangement with the Balkan States to maintain the "status quo," a guarantee by Russia of Constantinople and its neighbourhood, and some thing about railways. I had answered that I would support what I had promised M. Iswolsky in 1908 as to the Straits.⁽²⁾ The other matters were new, and I had said that I must consider them. Since then, nothing had passed, except what I had said to Count Benckendorff in telling him of the overtures which we had received from Turkey. I gave the French Minister the substance of this.

He told me that M. de Selves, in reply to the Russian request, had said that he would recognise and, if necessary, support the arrangement come to between M. Iswolsky and me in 1908 as to the Straits; but the other question as to a guarantee and so forth would have to be defined before it could be dealt with.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

(¹) [*cp. D.D.F., 3^{me} Sér., Vol. I, pp. 100-1, No. 114.*]

(²) [*v. Gooch & Temperley, Vol. V, p. 441, No. 377, and pp. 451-2, No. 387. cp. supra, p. 308, No. 284, note (2), and p. 311, Ed. note.*]

Communication from Turkish Ambassador, of November 18, 1911.

F.O. 46049/30691/11/44.

Aide-mémoire.

Les vaisseaux de guerre Italiens sillonnent les eaux Ottomans.

La résistance rencontrée à Tripoli, la situation intérieure en Italie, etc. constituent autant de causes déterminantes poussant l'ennemi à forcer le sort et tenter une action navale contre les ports et côtes Ottomans.

Le devoir impérieux incombe donc au Gouvernement Impérial de parer à cette éventualité, de plus en plus probable, en recourant à tous les moyens de défense. Dans le nombre, il en est quelques uns de nature à arrêter, durant une période indéfinie, le mouvement des bateaux de tout pavillon et à paralyser ainsi le commerce général.

Le Gouvernement Impérial n'a cessé d'observer dès le début de la guerre une attitude de calme et de pondération qui a été unanimement appréciée. Ainsi, les intérêts étrangers n'ont point été lésés.

Cependant, l'Italie pourrait s'aviser à aggraver son action si profondément illégale et injustifiable en étendant subitement la sphère des hostilités.

Le Gouvernement Impérial faillirait donc à ses devoirs primordiaux s'il ne recourrait pas à des mesures de défense.

Avant d'en décider l'application, il tient à faire une nouvelle démarche auprès des Puissances Amies pour Leur demander d'obtenir de l'Italie l'engagement de ne pas étendre les hostilités.

Il est évident que la neutralité des Puissances leur commande l'abstention. Mais, vu le caractère tout à fait spécial de cette guerre, les conditions dans lesquelles elle s'est produite et les multiples intérêts communs qui sont en jeu, une action amicale auprès de l'Italie, suivie à la rigueur d'une pression morale, n'affecterait nullement les devoirs de neutralité.

En résumé, le Gouvernement Ottoman ne peut sans péril observer une attitude passive, et les mesures à prendre atteindraient gravement le commerce étranger.

Ce dilemme ne doit surtout pas être interprété comme une menace. Le Gouvernement Impérial fait un loyal appel à la raison et à l'amitié des Grandes Puissances.

MINUTE.

The record of my conversation with Mensdorff today⁽¹⁾ will give the line that I think may be taken. The Turks can take what defensive measures they please that are in accord with the Treaty and conventional rights of neutrals, whatever these may be.

E G (2)

⁽¹⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 327-8, No. 317.]

⁽²⁾ [Sir Edward Grey's minute is undated but was evidently written on the 22nd. A note on the paper states that the *Aide-mémoire* did not reach the department of the Foreign Office concerned until the 21st.]

No. 311.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 46376/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 328.)

Pera, D. November 20, 1911, 5.40 P.M.

R. November 21, 1911, 8 A.M.

Russian Ambassador tells me that Italian Ambassador has informed Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs that the moment for decisive action is now very near;

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to St Petersburg (as No. 706); to Rome (as No. 257), enquiring if Sir R. Rodd could confirm this intelligence. Copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence, to the Director of Military Operations.]

that as his Government consider the occupation of islands would not serve their purpose, their action will be in another direction, although it may touch (group undecypherable : ? on) the interests of other Powers.

MINUTE.

This may be bluff to try and force us to intervene at Constantinople See 46377 [immediately succeeding document].

L. M.
A. N.
E. G.

No. 312.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 46377/30691/11/44.

Paris, D. November 20, 1911.

Tel. (No. 187.) *En clair*. [By Bag.]

R. November 21, 1911.

M. de Selves wishes me to let you know that the Italian Ambassador has made representations to the President of the Council on the complications which may arise from the continuance of war between Turkey and Italy, and has suggested that the French Government should exercise "une influence pacificatrice" on the basis that the Italian Government would be prepared to pay "une forte indemnité." M. de Selves undertook to consult you on the subject. He pointed out to M. Caillaux it was strange that the Italian Government should endeavour to enlist the intervention of France instead of her ally Germany; that Turkey was not at all likely to make peace at present for an indemnity; and the moment did not appear propitious for approaching the Porte on the subject. Such a proceeding on the part of France would be calculated to injure the good relations between Turkey and France for the benefit of German influence at Constantinople, of which the German Government would take advantage.

M. de Selves would be glad to have your opinion on the suggestion of the Italian Ambassador.

MINUTES.

I think that the Italian Amb[assado]r has made a similar proposal to the Sec[retary] of State.

L. M.
A. N.

He was not so explicit—he spoke to me as if on his own account. Telegraph to Sir F. Bertie. . . .⁽²⁾

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Here follows the text of the telegram printed as the immediately succeeding document.]

No. 313.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 46377/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 307.)

Foreign Office, November 21, 1911.

Your telegram, No. 187.⁽¹⁾

Italian Ambassador here has spoken to me in same sense, but not so explicitly, and without making any direct request. I maintained an attitude of reserve. I am not aware of any information to show that the Turks are prepared to listen to advice of this nature and in any case if given at all, it should be given by all five Powers.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 314.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Rome, November 22. 1911.

F.O. 46686/30691/11/44.

D. 1.25 p.m.

Tel. (No. 150.)

R. 7.15 p.m.

Constantinople telegram No. 323.⁽²⁾

Impression which I derive here does not confirm report from St. Petersburg. It is true that Italian fleet is ready to strike if necessary, but I learn that Italian Government have been impressed by the views expressed by some of the Great Powers as to the damage which their interests would suffer and the danger in the Balkans which might result from action nearer the centre. Secretary-general observed to me to-day that if all the Powers had expressed themselves as clearly as France had recently done in repudiating any desire to discourage Italian naval action they might feel less hesitation.

(Repeated to Constantinople.)

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to St. Petersburg (as No 709). Copies were sent to the Admiralty, to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 324-5, No. 311.]

No. 315.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Vienna, November 22, 1911.

F.O. 46687/30691/11/44.

D. 6.50 p.m.

Tel. (No. 124.)

R. 9.15 p.m.

Count von Aehrenthal spoke to me to-day of the Turkish proposal that the Powers should take steps to prevent Italy from taking action in the Dardanelles. He said that he thought demand of Turkish Government unjustifiably unreasonable,⁽²⁾ but that before replying to it he would consult the European Powers. Meanwhile, he was having the treaties and conventions with Turkey searched to see if any stipulation could be found in them which would justify Powers taking action in this matter. He was of opinion that if the Powers should decide to take action they should act in unity and together, and he said that representations should be made both at Rome and at Constantinople, and not at only one of those places.

Count von Aehrenthal observed that if the Italian fleet took serious action in the Dardanelles it would be a real European catastrophe, and might lead to the most serious consequences.

MINUTES.

I have made as exhaustive a search as possible in the time at my disposal but I cannot find that the Powers expressed any views in 1877 with regard to the extinction of the lights on the passage of the Dardanelles.

This would seem to be borne out by Sir E. Hertslet in a mem[orandum] of July 27, 1880, on the question of the Passage of the Dardanelles by merchant vessels at night in which he says "during the late war between Russia and Turkey the Porte extinguished the lights in the Straits, much to the annoyance of *neutral traders*," making no mention of any protests from the Powers.

R. W. B.

24.11.11.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [This phrase was afterwards corrected from Vienna. "Unjustifiably unreasonable" should read "not unreasonable." For Count von Aehrenthal's circular telegram of November 22, v. *O.-U.A.*, III, p. 575, No. 2967.]

I suggest that quite apart from questions of Treaty right or stipulation there is a test beyond them altogether—vizt. whether the action of Italy in the Straits or their neighbourhood is such as to imperil the safety of Constantinople and of Turkish territory and territorial waters on the shores of the Straits and of the Sea of Marmora. In defence of their own country Turkey are [*sic*]—as a last resource justified in disregarding the provisions of Treaties—and applying the maxim ‘*Salus reipublicae (here imperii) suprema lex.*’

Unless for the purpose of self preservation and self defence against imminent danger to their country I do not think that Turkey are [*sic*] justified in impeding directly or indirectly the free navigation of the Straits by neutral merchant vessels.

W. E. D.
24.11.11.

No. 316.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

St. Petersburg, November 22, 1911.

F.O. 46680/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 292.)

D. 8.24 P.M.

R. 9.40 P.M.

Constantinople telegram No. 323.⁽²⁾

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs tells me that Italian Ambassador has on more than one occasion told him that, in order to bring the war to an end, Italy might be forced to take some decisive action outside Tripolitan waters, but that he had not specified quarter where such action might be taken. Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs had reminded him of assurances given at the commencement, and had pointed out that, as far as Straits were concerned, the rights of neutrals must be respected and freedom of navigation left unimpaired. Ambassador had subsequently telegraphed to his Government, and received the reply that the Italian Government would not take any measures—such as establishment of a blockade—that would infringe neutral rights, but that they might have recourse to some military action, like the bombardment of a fort.

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs now learns from Berlin that the Ottoman Government contemplate closing of Straits, so as to guard against an attack. They would not, he contends, be entitled to take such a step, though no objection would be made to laying of mines for defensive purposes, provided that proper precautions were taken to preserve free passage to neutral ships by means of pilots, etc.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Rome (as No. 258); to Constantinople (as No. 408). Copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 324–5, No. 311]

No. 317.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 46869/30691/11/44.

(No. 77.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 22, 1911.

Count Mensdorff informed me to-day that Count Aehrenthal had received a communication from the Turkish Government as to the defensive measures which they might be compelled to take, and the consequent interference with neutral commerce, as a result of the intention of the Italian Government to extend the area of operations.⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. O.-U.A.*, III, pp. 576–7, No. 2969.]

Count Aehrenthal felt that Turkey was entitled to take defensive measures; and that there was nothing to be done except to wait, unless there was some indication which made it worth while to take soundings in Rome and Constantinople as to the possibility of bringing about an armistice. In his opinion, the situation was still so far from clear as to prevent any possibility of effective mediation. He had pointed out to the Turkish Government that, if he took in Rome a step such as they desired, he would be departing from the policy of non-intervention. He wished to know what I thought of the situation, and what I had replied to the Turkish Government.

I told Count Mensdorff that the Turkish communication had only just been sent in to me.⁽²⁾ I had read it on hearing that he was waiting to see me on the subject, but I had not yet had five minutes in which to consider it. I agreed that the Turkish Government were entitled to take defensive measures, provided that they did not infringe the rights which neutrals might have under the treaty respecting the Straits, and under a general convention drawn up at The Hague and ratified by Turkey and Italy; though I could not say from memory what Hague Convention there was, if any, which had been so ratified and which was relevant. As to an opportunity for mediation, from the Italian talk as to extended operations and the Turkish communication as to defensive measures it was obvious that each party to the war hoped that, by making neutral Powers uncomfortable, intervention on its behalf would be brought about. But the Italian Ambassador here continued to affirm that the annexation of Tripoli must remain absolute, while the Turkish Government would talk of nothing more than the retention of Turkish suzerainty, with an autonomous Tripoli, under a Mussulman Prince. Neither party gave the least hint of any intention to depart from these respective positions, and as long as this continued to be the case there did not seem to be any opportunity for mediation.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

(2) [v. *supra*, p. 324, No. 310.]

No. 318.

Communication by M. de Etter, of November 22, 1911.

Translation of Telegram sent to Russian Representatives at Constantinople and Rome.

F.O. 47114/30691/11/44.

Il résulte,—des entretiens que Nératov a eu avec Turkhan Pacha et M. Mellegari —que le Gouv[ernemen]t Italien serait décidé d'entendre le théâtre de ses opérations militaires jusqu'à la Mer Egée.

On a de plus l'impression à Berlin et Vienne, que le Gouv[ernemen]t turc admet la possibilité de la cloture des détroits,—comme moyen de défense,—sans même attendre l'agression.

Cette dernière mesure, ainsi que le blocus des Dardanelles par l'Italie—en créant des difficultés pour les communications entre les deux Mers—Noire et Egée—atteindraient d'une façon grave les intérêts de la Russie.

D'autre part,—le libre passage des bateaux de commerce neutres, étant garanti par l'art[icle] 8 de la Convention de Londres de 1871,⁽¹⁾—toute mesure militaire entravant ce libre passage des bateaux de commerce à travers les détroits constituerait une violation des droits légaux des neutres.

Il serait nécessaire et urgent de prévenir de ce qui précède les belligérants.

Préparez le terrain à Rome et Cons[tantino]ple.

Les Amb[assadeu]rs à Rome et à Cons[tantino]ple devraient se mettre d'accord en vue de représentations à faire en commun.

(1) [v. E. Hertslet: *The Map of Europe by Treaty* (1875), Vol. III, p. 1921.]

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 48317/30691/11/44.

(No. 862.)

Sir,

Pera, D. November 25, 1911.

R. December 4, 1911.

Assym Bey asked me to-day whether I had had any reply from you as to the question he put to me which I had repeated to you, Sir, in my telegram No. 278 of October 16th,⁽¹⁾ namely as to what support His Majesty's Government would give to this country in the event of Russia putting forward a proposal for the opening of the Straits to Russian men-of-war.

I replied in the negative.

But I reminded His Excellency of the conversation you had had with Rifaat Pasha when he was Ambassador in London in October 1908⁽²⁾ in which you had said that before giving any opinion on the subject you would wish to know the opinion of the Turkish Government and that if the question were to be raised you would consult the Turkish Government. The version His Excellency had of the conversation you had had with Rifaat Pasha did not correspond exactly with this and he was anxious to know whether in the event of the question being raised the Turkish Government could count on the support of His Majesty's Government.

He was under the impression that your language indicated that the Turkish Government would be left alone to face the question with the Russian Government in the event of the proposal being put forward and the Russian Government might choose a moment when it might be impossible for her single-handed to face such a demand on the part of Russia. It was not, he maintained, a matter that concerned Turkey and Russia alone but one of international interest, and if the passage of Russian ships of war to the exclusion of others were once granted the country might at any moment find herself faced by not only the Black Sea fleet but also the Baltic fleet.

I observed that I presumed that the privilege that was sought for would apply only to a time of peace and that in any case should such a question become a practical one, provision would be made for the passage of a limited number of ships at a time.

His Excellency then said that he was convinced that this was a question that the Russian Ambassador had great ambition to settle in favour of Russia; if he did so he would be idolized as one of the greatest men of his country and the man who signed such a Convention on behalf of Turkey could only be regarded as a traitor to his country.

The Russian Ambassador had, he could assure me most honestly, never mentioned the subject to him but he had grown suspicious of the language held by the *Novoe Vremye* [*sic*] that such a proposition was on the "tapis."

I do not believe that the relations between the Grand Vizier and the Minister for Foreign Affairs are very close and it is quite possible that His Highness has concealed entirely from his Minister for Foreign Affairs the private suggestions which the Russian Ambassador has made in this direction but from his conversation I am led to believe that he has knowledge from some source or another that my Russian colleague has been recently moving in this matter.

Assym Bey concluded by saying that he begged me again to approach you on the subject and insinuated very clearly that the policy which the present Government wished to adopt, namely, that of a very friendly attitude towards Great Britain and a final settlement of all outstanding differences would be considerably influenced by the extent of the support to which they could look to Great Britain in this matter.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 308, No. 284.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, p. 448, No. 383.]

No. 320.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F Cartwright.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 46687/30691/11/44.

Tel (No. 130.)

*Foreign Office, November 25, 1911.*Your telegram No. 124.⁽²⁾

Without departing from neutrality I do not see how we can object to measures that Turkey may take for her defence, so long as they are not inconsistent with rights of neutrals and neutral ships and commerce as established by international Treaties or practice.

I agree in M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffair]s' opinion that if any action is taken it should preferably be in unity and together and both at Rome and at Constantinople. The communications from both Italy and Turkey indicate that both Gov[ernmen]ts would like intervention or mediation to save them from the necessity of extended operations but each desires it on terms that would be entirely unacceptable to the other.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 310); to St. Petersburg (No. 718) Copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations. Telegrams were sent the same day to Paris (No. 311) and to St. Petersburg (No. 719) giving instructions that the Minister for Foreign Affairs should be informed, and asked his view "of suggesting that if Turkey would unreservedly place her case in the hands of the 5 Powers they might then appeal to Italy to agree to an armistice that would give the Powers time to find out whether any settlement could be arrived at through their mediation that would be consistent with the honour and interests of both Italy and Turkey." (F.O. 46687/30691/11/44)]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 326, No. 315.]

No. 321.

Communication from the Russian Embassy, of November 26, 1911.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 47433/30691/11/44.

M. Nératoff a tiré de ses derniers entretiens avec les Ambassadeurs d'Italie et de Turquie la conclusion qu'il fallait s'attendre à ce que l'Italie étendît le théâtre des opérations militaires jusqu'à la Mer Égée.

D'autres informations diplomatiques indiquent que le Gouvernement Ottoman envisage la fermeture des détroits comme une mesure défensive à prendre, même avant qu'il y ait eu attaque directe.

Cette mesure, ainsi que le blocus des Dardanelles par la flotte Italienne, porterait indubitablement la plus grande atteinte aux intérêts de la Russie, en créant des difficultés pour la communication entre la Mer Noire et la Mer Égée.

D'un autre côté, le Cabinet Impérial estime que l'art[icle] 3 du traité de Londres de 1871 assure aux marines marchandes neutres le libre passage par le Bosphore et les Dardanelles.

Il s'en suit que toute mesure militaire de nature à entraver de fait la liberté de navigation dans les détroits pour les besoins pacifiques du commerce constitue une atteinte directe aux droits légitimes des neutres.

C'est là le point de vue dont le Gouvernement Impérial croit devoir informer dès maintenant l'une et l'autre des Puissances belligérantes; les Ambassadeurs de Russie à Rome et à Constantinople ont reçu des instructions à cet effet.

Le Gouvernement Impérial aime à espérer que le Cabinet de Londres envisage la question sous le même jour et que le Gouvernement de S[a] M[ajesté] Britannique ne se refusera pas à munir ses Représentants auprès des Gouvernements Italien et Ottoman d'instructions conformes.

Londres, le 11/24 Novembre, 1911.

⁽¹⁾ [This communication was made on the 26th although it is dated the 24th. *cp. D.D.F., 3^{me} Sér., Vol. I, where the communication was dated the 23rd (pp. 179-80, No. 195) and made on the 25th (p. 195, No. 214).]*

No. 322.

Count Benckendorff to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 47434/30691/11/44.

Confidentiel.

London, D. November 26, 1911.

Cher Sir Edward,

R. November 27, 1911.

Je reçois un nouveau télégramme de M. Nératoff concernant la question traitée dans mon mémorandum du 11/24 courant.⁽¹⁾

M. Nératoff tient à préciser son point de vue.

Le Gouvernement Impérial considère que le passage par les détroits des marines marchandes des Puissances neutres en temps de paix, comme en temps de guerre se trouve garanti par les traités, en général, et spécialement par l'art[icle] 3 du traité de Londres de 1871.

Nous estimons dès lors, inadmissible tout obstacle à l'exercice de ce droit, qu'il s'agisse d'une mesure offensive, telle qu'un blocus ou toute autre mesure ayant le même effet, soit d'une mesure défensive, telle que la fermeture des détroits.

Pourtant cette manière de poser la question n'exclut pas les moyens techniques de défense ou d'attaque que les Puissances belligérantes pourraient trouver nécessaires.

M. Nératoff pense que, si les Puissances adoptent les points de vue ci-dessus, elles pourraient en informer les Puissances belligérantes simultanément, mais non conjointement.

Toutefois, afin de ménager les sentiments du Gouvernement Italien, pareille démarche aurait pu être faite non pas à Rome, mais auprès des Ambassadeurs d'Italie accrédités auprès des Gouvernements des 5 Puissances.

M. Nératoff me prie d'attirer Votre attention sur l'importance commerciale particulièrement sérieuse pour la Russie de l'affaire en question.

Je vous écris pour gagner du temps.

Bien sincèrement à Vous,

BENCKENDORFF.

Londres, le 18/26 novembre, 1911.

MINUTES.

See No. 47433.⁽¹⁾

The Russian view apparently amounts to this—that in virtue of Article III of the Treaty of 1871 the Straits must, as the means of access to the Black Sea, remain open to neutral merchant vessels, even if, by thus remaining open, the Turkish defences on the Straits are exposed to the view of passing vessels, whose crews may divulge important information to the Italians. As long as Italy does not, as was at one time feared, attack forts near the Straits there would seem to be no excuse for Turkey to close the Straits. But the fear now seems to exist that even if Italy takes action at such a distance as Smyrna or Salonica Turkey may retaliate by closing the Straits. This action would seem inconsistent alike with Turkish military necessities or with international treaties.

Perhaps we had better await replies to the annexed tel[egram]s sent to St. P[etersburg] and Vienna on Nov[ember] 25⁽²⁾ before taking any further action—but any warning to Italy should, to accomplish its object, not merely deprecate a blockade of the Dardanelles but also an extension of hostilities to the Aegean Sea. Sir R. Rodd considers such an extension is not imminent. The Russian proposal to make comm[unication]s not at Rome but at the 5 capitals to the Italian Amb[assado]r seems a good one.

A. P.

Nov[ember] 27, 1911.

The Italian Ambassador at St. Petersburg appears not to have held to M. Neratoff the language attributed to him by the latter and there seems from what Sir R. Rodd has telegraphed, reason to believe that the Italians do not at present intend to blockade the Dardanelles.⁽³⁾ Still the eventuality ought to be kept in view.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

⁽²⁾ [There are no telegrams annexed on this paper nor on paper 47433/30691/11/44, to which reference is made. The telegrams may be No. 130 to Sir F. Cartwright, v. *supra*, p. 330, No. 320, and No. 719 to Sir G. Buchanan, v. *ib.*, note ⁽¹⁾.]

⁽³⁾ [cp. *supra*, p. 326, No. 314.]

I think we should wait and hear what other Powers have to say before taking action but if we do approach the Italians I should have thought we ought also to approach the Turks pointing out that an attack on distant ports gives them no excuse for closing the Straits.

H N

Treaty Dept
Sir E. Davidson for observations in first instance

L. M

I fear there is little I can usefully add to what I have already written on another paper on the bearing of the 3rd Article of the Treaty of London on the present position. I think its terms warrant the Powers in doing what they can to stay any belligerent operations in the neighbourhood of the Dardanelles, and in whatever manner is thought to be most politically expedient. If the Italians would give any such assurance, there would be grounds for representing to Turkey that there was no necessity for interfering with neutral traffic in the Dardanelles whether by mining those Straits (as it is clear from what the Turkish Representative at the Hague Conference maintained the right to do by the reservation made and not contested) putting out the Lights at night, or other obstructive measures. But if the Italians, in spite of remonstrances, take any hostile steps in that vicinity such as bombarding any fort at the entrance, then I do not think the provision of the London Treaty, could be urged in preventing Turkey from taking such steps as she may think proper in the defence of Constantinople, in her own territorial waters.

W. M.

Nov. 27, 1911.

I don't see that, so far as Italy's feelings are concerned, it makes any difference whether the view of the 5 Powers are conveyed to Italy through their Representatives at Rome, or through the Ambassadors of Italy accredited to the Powers. It is merely a question of channel.

[W. M.]

It would apparently look less like a concerted measure if these views were to come filtering in to Rome from their own representatives at the five Capitals instead of being made simultaneously at the common centre of the Italian Capital.

I think myself that if Italy were to attack Smyrna this would not justify Turkey in closing the Straits to neutral merchant vessels—but if Italy were to extend the area of hostilities to the Straits then in my opinion Turkey would be justified in the exercise of the last privilege of self-preservation and quite apart from questions of technical Treaty-right in taking whatever measures she deemed necessary to protect Constantinople and the Turkish territory and waters in the immediate vicinity, which are involved in the passage of the Straits, from the Italian attack. In the last resort *salus republicae suprema lex est*.

W. E. D.

28.11.11.

[28 November, 1911.]

From an ordinary common sense point of view, it seems to me that Sir E. Davidson's view is correct and if Turkey is told that she must not defend herself if attacked in the Straits, she will be perfectly justified in asking the Powers to prevent an attack upon her in that quarter. I append a private minute by Sir E. Davidson addressed to me in which he raises the question of consulting the Law Officers on the point at issue.

Shall we suspend the consideration of this, until we hear what France, Austria and Germany think?

L. M.

We were informed by M. Daeschner that Germany had agreed to the Russian proposal—and we have tel[egraphed] to ascertain views of Vienna and Paris—and have also tel[egraphed] this morning to St. Petersburg. It would be well to await replies to these various tel[egram]s.

A. N.

A telegram has already been sent to Sir G. Buchanan to-day. Treaty or no Treaty I think our interest in the grain trade and commercial shipping connected with the Black Sea is such that we could not stand the Black Sea trade being stopped by this wretched war.

E. G.

F. D. A.

Sir E. Davidson.

L. M.

Private.

My dear Mallet,

It is not because I do not appreciate the very great importance and difficulty also, of this question that I do not suggest in my official minute on No. 47434 that it sh[oul]d be referred to the L[aw] O[fficers]

But it occurred to me that if the L[aw] O[fficers] should be of the same opinion as I am (which is at any rate a possibility) the existence of a formal opinion from *them* to that effect might be embarrassing from a political point of view to H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment].

This war moreover is not one in which Treaty obligations are being very strictly observed by the Italian belligerent (or by the neutral Powers!) and therefore Treaty observance is not a very good text to take for a sermon to the Porte on its duties.

Y[ou]rs
W. E. D.
28 11.11.

No. 323.

Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 48221/30691/11/44.

(No. 48.)

Sir,

Cettinje, D. November 27, 1911.

R. December 2, 1911.

This morning the King sent for me and said that the struggle between Italy and Turkey was causing him the gravest preoccupation. He failed to see how the Italians were going to bring the conflict to a conclusion at an early date. By their proclamation they had rendered any compromise impossible while they had at the same time given the Turks ample time to prepare for hostile action in the Ægean Sea. The Turks were now mobilising a division on his frontier in Kossovo but he thought that in their present position they would do well to leave their neighbours alone. Small countries like his could only look on patiently for the present but a conflagration from no matter what side would be welcome.

I replied that I was much concerned to hear His Majesty say so.

I have, &c.

J. DE SALIS.

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch was sent to Constantinople (as No. 332), on December 14.]

No. 324.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

St. Petersburg, November 27, 1911.

F.O. 47463/30691/11/44.

D. 8.25 P.M.

Tel. (No. 304.)

R. 9 P.M.

Your telegram No. 719.⁽²⁾

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs expressed himself as quite ready to join with the other Powers should they decide to adopt any course such as that which you suggest. He believes, however, that Turkey is determined to continue the war, and does not therefore think that she would be disposed to "unreservedly place her case in the hands of the five Powers" if by this is meant that she is to give the Powers a more or less free hand to act in her name. If, on the other hand, she refuses

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It asked for views of Minister for Foreign Affairs on the suggestion that if Turkey would unreservedly place her case in the hands of the five Powers they could then appeal to Italy to agree to an armistice. (F.O. 46687/30691/11/44.)]

to do so Italy would hardly consent to an armistice of several months on account of expense war is causing her. Such an armistice, moreover, if it did not lead to peace, would bring us very near the spring and the possible opening of the Albanian question.

He told me that Russian Ambassador at Constantinople had put before him somewhat similar suggestion with regard to an armistice, but that he personally thought it would be better to wait a little till Italy had rendered the occupation of Tripoli more effective or had taken some decisive action elsewhere. This would constitute a new fact which might be used to influence Turkey.

He asked me whether he might now hope to receive your reply to Russian circular respecting the possible closing of Dardanelles,⁽³⁾ adding that French, German, and Austrian Governments had replied that, according to article 8 of Convention of London, Straits must be kept open for commercial navigation.

(³) [*v. supra*, p. 330, No. 331.]

No. 325.

Sir Eduard Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 47463/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 731.)

Foreign Office, November 28, 1911, 2.45 p.m.

Your telegram No. 304.⁽²⁾ You may inform Acting M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that we agree as to importance of keeping Straits open for commercial navigation, but in view of assurances given at Rome that Italian Gov[ernmen]t have no present intention of blockading Dardanelles it seems unnecessary to say anything there. Statement as regards Italian intentions might be used for a communication at Constantinople if it is thought that Turkish Gov[ernmen]t really contemplate closing Straits. You may tell Acting M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that we have informed Turks that we cannot object to defensive measures that are not contrary to rights of neutrals as regulated by international Treaties or practice.

You may however tell Acting M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that I should not regard this as authorizing a step that would be equivalent to blockade of whole of Black Sea and its trade.

(¹) [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 323); to Vienna (No. 133); to Rome (No. 265); to Constantinople (No. 434); to Berlin (No. 231) on November 30 (F.O. 47835/30691/11/44.)]

(²) [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

No. 326.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 47714/30691/11/44

Vienna, D. November 28, 1911, 11.25 p.m.

Tel. (No. 126.)

R. November 29, 1911, 8 a.m.

Your tel[egram] No. 132.⁽²⁾
Dardanelles.

Russian Ambassador, who saw Count Aehrenthal this afternoon, informs me that the latter has instructed Austrian Ambassador at Rome to sound Ambassadors of the Great Powers there on the subject of asking Italy to abstain from taking

(¹) [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 327); to Berlin (as No. 225); to St. Petersburg (as No. 738). Copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence, to the Director of Military Operations.]

(²) [Not reproduced. It merely enquired what reply the Austro-Hungarian Government had given to the Russian circular (*v. supra*, p. 330, No. 321). It was repeated to Paris (No. 322) and Berlin (No. 224), *mutatis mutandis*. (F.O. 47463/30691/11/44.)]

action in the Dardanelles on the ground of rights of neutrals under the terms of Convention of London. If they are united, Austrian Ambassador is authorised to act with his colleagues.⁽³⁾

If the Italian reply proves satisfactory Count Aehrenthal would propose that it should be communicated to the Porte.

French Ambassador informs me that he has just received a telegram from his Gov[ernmen]t stating that Italian Ambassador at Paris has assured French Gov[ernmen]t that Italy will not take any action against the Dardanelles.

Confidential. Count Aehrenthal is just now suffering from a violent fit of irritability, which I believe is due to some cause of friction between Berlin and Vienna. I believe that Germany considers Count Aehrenthal to be too friendly to Italy.

Repeated to Rome.

(3) [*cp. O -U.A.*, III, p. 598, No. 3003.]

No. 327.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 48154/30691/11/44.

(No. 260.) Very Confidential.

Sir,

Rome, D. November 28, 1911.

R. December 2, 1911.

I have had the honour, in the course of last week, to report to you by telegraph the attitude of the Italian Government in view of the widely circulated rumours that a blockade of the Dardanelles was imminent, a rumour for which I have hitherto consistently held there was no justification.⁽¹⁾ The reports received at the Russian Embassy here and the handling of the question by the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs in St. Petersburg seem under the circumstances somewhat difficult to explain.

I observe from the telegraph sections that on the 12th November Mr. O'Beirne reported that the Italian Ambassador had intimated to the Acting Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs that Italy would in any future action outside Tripoli, to which she might resort, refrain from operations against the Dardanelles.⁽²⁾ Less than a week later, it appears from Sir Gerard Lowther's telegram No. 323 of the 20th instant,⁽³⁾ the same Ambassador was reported to have stated at St. Petersburg that the moment for decisive action was very near and might touch the interests of other Powers. In consequence of this intimation, which evidently at the Russian Foreign Office was regarded as having reference to the Dardanelles, in spite of the assurances already given, the Russian Embassy here was instructed to prepare the way for a communication to be made to the Italian Government, pointing out that under Article 3 of the Convention of London any such action would not be countenanced by Russia. The First Secretary of the Russian Embassy, who, in consequence of the feeble health of the Ambassador, conducts all the public business, was much concerned at the instruction thus received, inasmuch as all his information went to show that there were no grounds for the apprehensions entertained in St. Petersburg, and he found his views confirmed by those which I have expressed as well as those formed at the French Embassy. He therefore dealt with the matter tactfully and confined himself for the moment to explaining to the Minister for Foreign Affairs that at the present season of great activity in the grain trade from the Black Sea serious anxiety was felt in Russia as to any development of hostilities which might interfere with the free exit of grain ships. He was assured that at the present time no action in the Dardanelles was in contemplation and reported this to his Government, deprecating, as I understand, any representation here which would prejudice the friendly feeling towards Russia, which he considered it valuable at the present

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 326, No. 314.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 322, No. 307.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 324-5, No. 311.]

moment to retain. He also learned that the Italian Ambassador in St. Petersburg had received no instructions from his Government to make any communication in the sense of that reported in Sir. G. Lowther's telegram No. 323 above referred to. Previous experience suggests that the Italian Ambassador in Russia and the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs have a facility for misunderstanding each other (see my telegram No. 109 of October 14th).⁽⁴⁾ To his surprise the Russian Secretary found that the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs had, without waiting for information from Rome as to whether the rumour was or was not well-founded, already sounded some of the other Powers, among which were, I understand, Germany and France, as to the advisability of making urgent representations to Rome:—presumably also to Constantinople. Germany had, he told me, at once adhered to the proposal.

He again explained to M. Nératoff that in his opinion any warning here was at the present time superfluous, and the information he sent apparently had some effect upon the Russian Foreign Office as the original proposal was so far modified as to take the form of a communication to be made to the Italian Ambassadors by the Powers and not to the Italian Government direct.

The day before yesterday, however, he found the Italian papers full of the information, derived from St. Petersburg, that Russia was protesting against a blockade of the Dardanelles, and fearing that the instruction he had previously received to prepare the way for a communication on the subject might be regarded as not having been adequately carried out he again went to the Italian Foreign Office and explained that the obligations of the grain trade might compel Russia to take exception to a blockade. He found, as he had anticipated, that the prospect of such a communication was extremely distasteful to the Marquis di San Giuliano, who at once enquired whether he had not made it sufficiently plain that no action against the Dardanelles was under contemplation, adding that it had not even as yet been discussed here. All communications or warnings of such a nature addressed to the Italian Government would act, His Excellency maintained, as an encouragement to Turkey to prolong the war, by making her believe that the other Great Powers were on her side.

The Russian Embassy here is considerably disturbed at the line which has been adopted at St. Petersburg, feeling that it has not a little compromised the very favourable position which Russia had occupied in Italian estimation since the outbreak of the war.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

⁽⁴⁾ [Not reproduced. It referred to discussions on the question of mediation in connection with which some confusion arose. (F.O. 40517/30691/11/44.)]

No. 328.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

Vienna, November 29, 1911.

F.O. 47836/30691/11/44.

D. 6.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 127.)

R. 8 P.M.

Dardanelles.

Count Aehrenthal told me today that he had given his approval in principle to the Russian proposal conditionally on all the Powers agreeing to it. He expressed his preference for the first Russian proposal, which, according to him, amounted

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Berlin; to St. Petersburg, to Rome, to Constantinople; to Paris by bag, on November 30. Copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

to this: Powers were to draw the attention of the Turkish and Italian Governments to article 8 of the Treaty of London, and to express opinion that this article debarred either of belligerents from taking any measures which could impede free navigation by neutrals of the Dardanelles. Such a notification would have required no answer, but would have acted as a warning both at Rome and at Constantinople. At present Count Aehrenthal said that Italy had given apparently verbally a kind of assurance that she did not contemplate taking any immediate steps against the Dardanelles. Count Aehrenthal observed that Powers had no official communication from the Italian Government which they could lay in concrete form before the Porte as justification for any advice they may give to the Porte to abstain from taking defensive measures in the Dardanelles.

His Excellency thought that under the circumstances it would be difficult for the Powers to take action at Constantinople alone, especially if Turkey's defensive works were of a reasonable character.

Count Aehrenthal added that, if the navigation of the Dardanelles was kept open during daylight, Powers would have no reasonable ground to complain.

No. 329.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 47835/30691/11/44.

Berlin, D. November 29, 1911, 8.36 P.M.

Tel. (No. 108.)

R. November 30, 1911.

Your telegram No. 224 (of Nov[ember] 28): Dardanelles.⁽²⁾

German Government have instructed their representatives at Rome and Constantinople to take steps proposed by the Russian Government if the other representatives receive similar instructions. To second proposal, that each Government should make representations to Italian and Turkish representatives abroad, German Government have replied that they see no advantage in such a course, and prefer method first suggested.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 333-4, No. 324, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

No. 330.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 47840/30691/11/44.

Constantinople, D. November 29, 1911, 10.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 326.)

R. November 30, 1911, 8 A.M.

My despatch No. 862.⁽¹⁾

Russian Ambassador to-day again asked Grand Vizir for a reply to his private proposals regarding Straits.

Grand Vizir referred him to M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] to whom he developed at length his ideas as to opening Straits to Russian warships.

Question has therefore now assumed official character.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 329, No. 319.]

No. 331.

Sir G Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*St. Petersburg, November 30, 1911.*

F.O. 47914/30691/11/44.

D. 1.32 P.M.

Tel. (No. 310.)

R. 12.5 P.M.

Your telegram No. 731.⁽²⁾

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs agrees that there is no need to take any action at Rome, but considers that as Ottoman Government made an official communication to the Powers indicating the possibility of closing the Straits it is necessary to take official notice of it. It is indifferent to him whether a communication to the effect that any defensive measures which Turkey may decide to take must not interfere with neutral rights or stop commercial navigation should be made through the Ambassadors at Constantinople to the Porte or by respective Foreign Ministers to the Turkish Ambassadors at various capitals.

MINUTES

The Turkish Amb[assador] has been informed very much in the sense desired by Russia but the D[e]p[utemen]t cannot produce any record of this.⁽³⁾

L. M

The Turkish Ambassador is going to call to-morrow⁽⁴⁾ and I will speak to him in this sense and telegraph to Sir G. Buchanan.

E G
30 11.11

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence, to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 334, No. 325.]

⁽³⁾ [*cp. infra*, p. 345, No. 339.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*cp. infra*, p. 340, No. 335.]

No. 332.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.

F.O. 47913/30691/11/44.

(No. 312.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 30, 1911.

The Russian Ambassador having emphasised the vast importance of the Black Sea grain trade, I said that I assumed that British shipping was greatly interested, and I did not think that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment], any more than Russia, could stand its being stopped, but I was reluctant to make representations at Constantinople unless really necessary. Some odium w[ould] be incurred if representations made were unnecessary and an opening w[ould] be given to the Turks to request intervention in the war.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

No. 333.

Sir R Rodd to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

Rome, December 1, 1911.

F.O. 48124/30691/11/44.

D. 1 P.M.

Tel. (No. 155.)

R. 4.10 P.M.

Vienna telegram No. 127.⁽²⁾

Count von Aehrenthal's observation that Powers had no official communication from Italy regarding Dardanelles.

The only power which has raised question officially appears to have received such communication as official agency here has issued to press telegram in following terms:—

“Petersburg. Official. Italy has informed Russia that she has no intention at present time of blockading straits.”

Secretary-General, in referring to this notification, said he only regretted that word translated “present time” had been inserted, as he recognised, apart from other considerations, situation created by article 18 of Declaration of London,⁽³⁾ which, though not yet ratified, Italy had declared her intention of following. Under-S[ecretary] of S[tate for] foreign affairs told me that interruption of Dardanelles would be as disadvantageous to Italy as to other powers, as she is partially dependent for grain supplies on Black Sea trade, as also for important Russian market for Italian oil and vegetable produce.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 321); to St. Petersburg (as No. 751); to Berlin (as No. 232); to Vienna (as No. 138); to Constantinople (as No. 443). Copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence, to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 336-7, No. 328.]

⁽³⁾ [Article 18 of Declaration of London runs as follows: “The blockading forces must not bar access to neutral ports or coasts.” A. & P., (1909), LIV, (Cd. 4554), p. 350. For Declaration of London in detail v. *Gough & Temperley*, Vol. VIII, Subject Index. *sub* LONDON NAVAL CONFERENCE.]

No. 334.

Sir F Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

Vienna, December 1, 1911.

F.O. 48132/47832/11/7.

D. 7.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 129.)

R. 9 P.M.

Bulgaria.

French Ambassador saw Count Aehrenthal yesterday, who told him that he had seen the King of Bulgaria. The latter was pacifically inclined, but said that situation in the Balkans would become dangerous if war dragged on until the spring, or if Turkey emerged from the war seriously weakened. In that case agitation would begin again in Macedonia, and the party of action in Bulgaria would likewise agitate, organise demonstrations, and make use of bombs. The latter argument seemed to carry much weight with the King.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 505), to Berlin (as No. 289); to Rome (as No. 198); to St. Petersburg (as No. 314); to Constantinople (as No. 317); to Bucharest (as No. 13). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

French Ambassador asked Count Aehrenthal whether the King had come to Vienna to sound his Excellency as to his friendly dispositions towards Bulgaria. Count Aehrenthal made no reply. French Ambassador suspects that the King desires to ascertain whether Bulgaria will be allowed by Count Aehrenthal to come to terms with Roumania in view of possible eventualities in the Balkans.

No. 885.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 48367/48367/11/44.

(No. 818. Secret.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 1, 1911.

The Turkish Ambassador told me to-day that the Russian Ambassador in Constantinople had made certain proposals to the Turkish Government, amounting to an Alliance with Turkey.

As far as I could gather, these proposals were those about which we knew that the Russian Ambassador in Constantinople had talked some time ago. As the Turkish Ambassador assured me that they had now been made officially, I asked him to let me have an "aide-mémoire" on which I could consult the Prime Minister and my other Colleagues.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 886.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 49371/30691/11/44.

(No. 888.) Confidential.

Sir,

Constantinople, D. December 2, 1911.

R. December 11, 1911.

I had the honour to inform you in my telegram no. 326 of the 29th ultimo,⁽¹⁾ that my Russian colleague had submitted to Assim Bey his proposals for a rapprochement with Turkey, the latter conceding to Russia the right of passage through the Straits of her men-of-war to the exclusion of those of other Powers, and Russia conceding her rights to the building of certain railways in northern Anatolia.

M. Tcharykow tells me he is satisfied with the manner in which Assim Bey received these overtures, though I cannot ascertain that the Minister for Foreign Affairs went further than to admit that in certain directions the interests of Russia and Turkey were identical.

Although the public is not aware that such a drastic proposal as the opening of the Straits is really being put forward in a practical form, some idea of the kind has leaked out in well-informed circles. It is thought that Russia is now endeavouring to bring some pressure to bear on the Powers to prevent hostile action by Italy at the Dardanelles and thus to pose as the friend of Turkey, and she will no doubt make the most of the power she has to exercise a restraining influence on Bulgaria, but there can be little doubt that generally the suggestion of Russia will meet with violent opposition from all parties in this country, in spite of the articles from the pen of Hussein Jahid to which I had the honour to call your attention in my despatch No. 760 of October 28th,⁽²⁾ and the recent action of Russia in Persia is only likely to increase the suspicion of her which is not unnaturally the corner stone of the political opinion of the vast majority of the people of this country. It is extremely doubtful

⁽¹⁾ [*v supra*, p. 337, No. 330.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It referred to a heated argument in two prominent Turkish newspapers on the subject of *rapprochement* with Russia. (F.O. 48720/30691/11/44)]

whether any Government could voluntarily agree to such a concession, and it is not improbable that if driven far in the matter Turkey would prefer to open the Straits to the men-of-war of all the Powers. It is generally thought that a concession of this nature, no matter how much surrounded by limitations, would eventually mean the exclusion of the Ottomans from Constantinople. But the feeling is strong amongst Ottomans that Great Britain would never allow such a radical change to take place, and our consent would, I imagine, arouse considerable suspicions as to our possible future action in the Persian Gulf. They realise that once the privilege obtained, Russia would abandon the ice-bound Baltic and keep a vast fleet in the Black Sea. The views that other Powers might hold as to such a change are of course still unknown to the Government here, but the entire change that it would produce in the balance of power in the Mediterranean would probably give Turkey some hope that she might look for support in the direction of such Powers as Austria and Germany. The former could hardly look with equanimity on the presence of such a large fleet in such close proximity, and Germany, if she has any ideas of territorial aggrandisement here, could only view the change with disfavour.

My Austrian colleague, who for some time has been suspicious that this proposal was on foot, told me that he ignored the views of his Government, but he is evidently very nervous about it.

My French colleague has not committed himself as to the views of his Government, but he expressed to me his conviction that our Russian colleague was living in a fool's paradise if he really thought that Turkey would ever willingly consent to such a change.

The moment does not seem to be very opportune for this proposal to be put forward in a friendly way, if such were ever possible.

But if Turkey is eventually compelled, in the absence of support from the Powers, to abandon what she believes to be the backbone of her existence, to what other compensation can she look? Presumably only an economic one. Germany and Austria have in principle accepted the increase of 4% and the application of the *temettu*⁽³⁾ to their subjects, and have respectively obtained their *quid pro quo* in Alexandretta and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Russia having practically no subjects here and a limited importation, would undoubtedly give way on these two points. France, in spite of her undertakings to us, might eventually also be tempted to agree in order to find a suitable guarantee for her railway schemes.

In the absence of any support given by us to Turkey the pressure for us to follow suit in these concessions will be very strong.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

MINUTES.

I can't quite follow the line of argument in the last paragraph.

Germany and Austria would probably object more strongly than we should to the opening of the Dardanelles. I recollect, but the Library have been unable to trace, a remark of the German Emperor to the effect that if Russia insisted on freedom of exit for her warships from the Black Sea the other Powers should insist on freedom of entrance to the Black Sea for their warships. This, we know from M. Isvolsky's remarks of 1908, would not be acceptable to Russia.

It may be useful to recall an intimation made in August 1909 by the Japanese Amb[assado]r, that the question of the opening of the Straits had a certain importance for Japan. (32057/09)⁽⁴⁾

A. P.

Dec[ember] 18, 1911.

I hear from a source usually very well informed that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t are much annoyed with M. Tcharykoff for his recent action and that there is even a question of asking him to "faire valoir les droits à la retraite."

H. N.

L. M.

A. N.

E. G.

⁽³⁾ [i.e., Income tax.]

⁽⁴⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 52, No. 45.]

No. 337.

Sir W. Townley to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 49466/30691/11/44.

(No. 64.) Confidential.

Sir,

Bucharest, D. December 2, 1911.

R. December 11, 1911.

A few days ago the question of a threatened Italian attack upon the Dardanelles came up in the course of a conversation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs. At that moment it was authoritatively stated in the Bucharest papers that the Italian Government had decided upon this measure in order to force Turkey's hand. The danger having to all appearances now passed, Monsieur Maioresco's remarks have ceased to have any but an academic interest, due to the fact that they reveal the opinion held by the Roumanian Government of to-day of Russia's present military strength.

The Minister asserted that previous Italian menaces to bombard Smyrna, Salonica, and various Turkish Islands had been kept to threats only by reason of Austrian representations. He expressed his belief that even if Russia, to whom it was said that Italy had communicated her intention, were to acquiesce in the attack on the Dardanelles, with its consequent breach of existing treaties, Austria and other powers of Western Europe would protest, and in any case would not allow Italy to proceed further, even if she succeeded in forcing the Dardanelles, a feat in which her past naval history in no wise encouraged a belief in her power to perform.

That Italy should meditate any such action to force Turkey to accept her terms of peace, showed, His Excellency thought, that her position in Tripoli must be a highly unsatisfactory one. It seemed to him that Signor Giolitti had quite misunderstood Turkey and the Turkish character. That Italy broke her head against Arab levies in Northern Africa made but small difference to Turkey, and even the bombardment of such places as Smyrna and Salonica, from which foreign merchants would be the chief sufferers, would not produce much more than a shrug of the shoulders, but the forcing of the Dardanelles, with a possible eventual bombardment of Constantinople, would be another matter, and would closely touch Turkish national prestige.

Moreover, Monsieur Maioresco added, such action would reopen the entire Eastern Question, and he did not believe that that would be allowed to occur now, when Russia is clearly in no position to play a part. Were Russia to be standing alone and isolated to-day, he could well believe that certain Powers would gladly avail themselves of the opportunity to play her a trick, but in spite of her own present weakness, Russia, he said, has powerful friends who are prepared to stand by her. His Excellency thought that Russia would not be in a position to hold her own militarily against a first-class Power for another six or seven years.

I have, &c.

WALTER TOWNLEY.

(1) [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 338.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 49442/48615/11/3.

(No. 206.) Confidential.

Sir,

Vienna, D. December 5, 1911.

R. December 11, 1911.

With reference to my despatch No. 203 of the 3rd December,⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to forward to you herewith a despatch which I have received from the Military

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 48615/48615/11/3.)]

Attaché to this embassy, dealing with the resignation of General Conrad von Hoetzendorf, the Chief of the Austrian General Staff.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

Enclosure in No. 338.

Lieutenant-Colonel Eardley-Russell to Sir F Cartwright.(²)

(No. 18.) Confidential.

Sir,

Vienna, December 1, 1911.

I have the honour to inform your Excellency that it has this morning been announced in the press that General Baron Conrad von Hoetzendorf has tendered his resignation of the post of Chief of the General Staff, and that His Majesty the Emperor has accepted his resignation. Thus the differences which have been known for some little time past to exist between Count Aehrenthal and Baron Conrad have ended in a victory for the former.

This result is of no small importance, for it practically amounts to the victory of a policy of peace towards Italy over one which, if not actually a war policy, might not inconceivably have led to war.

The fact of the matter appears to be that Baron Conrad, who ever since his appointment to the post of Chief of the General Staff in November 1906 has kept steadily in view the possibility of a war with Italy, and has done his utmost to bring the Austro-Hungarian army into a state of preparedness for such an eventuality, has recently considered it imperative to go farther in the matter of military preparations than Count Aehrenthal has deemed advisable from the point of view of Austria-Hungary's foreign policy, and that he has pressed his views to such an extent that the Emperor has at last been obliged to choose between him and Count Aehrenthal.

It is not, however, only Baron Conrad who has suffered a defeat, for it is generally accepted as a fact that his policy was warmly supported by, if not actually prompted by, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and thus the Archduke too may be regarded as being to a certain extent involved in the defeat.⁽³⁾

It is not possible to say what the exact measures have been to which Count Aehrenthal has taken exception, but it is believed that Baron Conrad's proposals included a large increase in the number of troops stationed on the Italian frontier, a considerable extension of the fortification works on that frontier, and an increase of the artillery throughout the army.

As I had the honour to report in my No. 12 of the 9th November, 1911, the programme of the changes in the stations of troops to be carried out in the spring of 1912 provided for an increase of eight battalions and one field artillery regiment in the strength of the two army corps stationed immediately on the Italian frontier. I have since learned on fairly reliable authority that this programme, as originally prepared by the military authorities, provided for the movement of a considerably larger number of units to that frontier, but that it was subsequently modified at the express wish of the Emperor, acting on the advice of Count Aehrenthal, who apparently feared that any considerable movement of troops in that direction might jeopardise the success of his attempts to utilise Italy's present embarrassments for the improvement of the relations between the two countries.

Even after the programme had been thus modified, it was stated that it would not be published in the press in the usual way, but that the orders as to the move-

(²) [The text given above is printed from the copy in the Confidential Print, as the original was sent to the War Office.]

(³) [cp. an important memorandum by Count von Aehrenthal on the duties of the Chief of Staff, dated October 22, 1911. *O.-U.A.*, III, pp. 466-70, No. 2809.]

ments which were to take place would simply be communicated to the commanders of the various army corps concerned, this departure from the usual procedure being supposed to be due to the representations of Count Aehrenthal, who was anxious to avoid offending the susceptibilities of Italy. It would appear on the face of it that secretiveness in a matter such as this would tend to create rather than to allay suspicion, and I am unable to vouch for the truth of the statement that any attempt was made to keep the movements secret, but the fact remains that the programme was only published after details of the moves had begun to leak out from the various army corps head-quarters, and it is clear if it became public property in spite of Count Aehrenthal's express wish to the contrary the latter would have no slight ground for complaint, especially if he had reason to believe that no serious attempt had been made to keep it secret.

It appears to be not improbable that Count Aehrenthal has received the support of the "common" Minister of Finance in his opposition to Baron Conrad's proposals, for it is believed that those proposals involved very heavy expenditure.

As I had the honour to report in my No. 7 of the 9th February, 1911, it was decided at a conference of "common" Ministers in November 1910 to make considerable reductions in the estimates, as originally prepared by the military authorities, of the additional expenditure which would be entailed in connection with the carrying into effect of the new law of military service, and "with certain proposals put forward by the Chief of the General Staff with regard to the development of the army." As a matter of fact an estimate of 14,791,667*l.* to cover certain items of non-recurring expenditure during the next eight years was then cut down to one of 4,166,667*l.* to cover similar expenditure during the next five years, and it is therefore clear that Baron Conrad's proposals for the development of the army were only to be carried into effect to a very limited extent.

Within the last few weeks, however, rumours have been current to the effect that Baron Conrad has again been asking for large sums of money for expenditure upon the army. According to a report which has reached me from a usually well-informed source, his demands amounted to a sum of no less than 25,000,000*l.* (presumably to be spread over a series of years)—though it was stated that the War Minister was not prepared to ask for more than half that amount—and a report has even been current to the effect that expenditure to the extent of some 4,000,000*l.* in excess of budget provision has been actually embarked upon since the outbreak of the Italian-Turkish war. Whatever the exact figures may be, it appears to be reasonably certain that Baron Conrad's financial demands have been somewhat extensive, and that they have been pressed with no little vigour, and it is not improbable that considerable expenditure has already been incurred in anticipation of subsequent sanction by the Delegations—as was done to the extent of 7,500,000*l.* at the time of the annexation crisis.

Baron Conrad's resignation has been received with expressions of regret from all sections of the press, and there is no doubt that the Austro-Hungarian army is losing a Chief of the General Staff of exceptional ability and energy, and one who has done much to increase the efficiency of the army. His services are not, however, to be entirely lost to the army, for he is being appointed to an inspector-generalship which has been vacant for some months past. It is worthy of note that the head-quarters of this particular inspector-generalship are being transferred from Budapest to Vienna, and that thus the close touch which has existed between Baron Conrad and the Archduke Franz Ferdinand need not necessarily come to an end.

General Blasius Schemua, hitherto the head of one of the "sections" in the War Office, has already been nominated to succeed Baron Conrad as Chief of the General Staff. This officer appears to be more distinguished for his charming personality than for his great ability, and the feeling in the army appears to be one of sincere regret at the loss of so brilliant a Chief of the General Staff, and of doubt as to whether his successor is quite the right man for the post. I understand that General Schemua has to all intents and purposes been nominated by the Archduke

Franz Ferdinand, and that the general lines of his military policy may be regarded as identical with those of his predecessor, but it is not anticipated that he will press his views with the same vigour.

I have, &c.

EARDLEY EARDLEY-RUSSELL,

Military Attaché.

MINUTE

It is interesting to note that Count Achrenthal hopes to take advantage of Italy's present embarrassments to make the relations between the two countries more friendly.

E. D.
11.12.11.
E. A. C.
Dec. 11
W. L.
A. N.
E. G.

No 339.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 47114/30691/11/44.

(No. 321.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 5, 1911.

The Councillor of the Turkish Embassy called at this Office on the 25th Nov[ember], and read to Sir A. Nicolson a telegram from his Gov[ernment] to the effect that M. Tcharykoff had informed them that the Russian Gov[ernment] had taken the initiative in proposing to the other Gov[ernments] that they should take steps at Rome with the object of inducing Italy not to extend the sphere of hostilities. Sir A. Nicolson told the Turkish Councillor that we had not been approached by the Russian Gov[ernment] on the subject.

Sir A. Nicolson also took the opportunity of informing the Councillor that, in reply to the recent communic[ation] of the Turkish Embassy.⁽²⁾ we did not object to Turkey taking any measures for her defence, so long as they were not inconsistent with rights of neutrals and neutral ships as established by international treaties or practice. The Councillor enquired whether we had any observ[ations] to make on the other portion of the Embassy's communic[ation], i.e., urging Italy not to extend the area of hostilities. Sir A. Nicolson said that we wished to continue our attitude of strict non-intervention and had no remarks to make.

[I am, &c.]
[E. GREY.]

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch was based on a minute by Sir A. Nicolson recording the interview. The following minutes appear below that of Sir A. Nicolson on the paper:—

Since writing the above, M. Daeschner has informed me that the Russian Gov[ernment] did make the request at Paris *this morning* asking for support of French Gov[ernment] at Rome and Constantinople—and that a similar request has been made at Berlin, where the German Gov[ernment] promised to instruct their Amb[assadors] at Rome and Constantinople to support the Russian request.

We should do as the French and Germans have done if we are asked.

A. N.

E. G.]

⁽²⁾ [cp. *supra*, p. 324, No. 310.]

Communication from the Turkish Embassy, of December 5, 1911.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 48650/48554/11/44.

Strictement confidentiel et privé.

Aide-Mémoire.

La Russie a proposé au Gouvernement Impérial de s'entendre pour s'assurer le libre passage des Détroits, à l'exclusion bien entendu des bâtiments de guerre de toutes les autres Puissances.

La Russie s'engagerait à défendre les détroits avec la Turquie s'ils venaient à être attaqués par des forces étrangères, à lui assurer son concours dans l'exécution du projet de construction de chemins de fer en Asie-Mineure et de s'entremettre à la réalisation d'une entente avec les États Balkaniques.

Le Gouvernement Impérial se placera naturellement sur le terrain des Traités de 1841, 1856 et 1878, établissant la régime des Détroits, mais il désirerait connaître d'une façon claire et précise, vu la déclaration de Son Excellence Sir E. Grey à la Chambre des Communes de la décision du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique de s'abstenir de toute intervention aussi longtemps qu'atteinte ne sera pas portée aux intérêts anglais,⁽²⁾ si le Foreign Office ne considère pas comme portant atteinte à ses intérêts les avantages que la Russie voudrait s'assurer par la conclusion d'un nouvel arrangement concernant le régime actuel des Détroits?

Londres le 2 Décembre, 1911.

MINUTES

I should be inclined to reply that any change of this nature must of course interest all the Treaty Powers concerned, and that until we have been apprised by the Russian Gov[ernmen]t as well as the Turkish as to their wishes and have consulted those other Powers we should hesitate to express any opinion as to the effect of any changes

A. P.

Dec[ember] 5, 1911.

The above answer seems reasonable and suitable, but I presume the question will be discussed by the Cabinet among whom the paper will be circulated this eve[nin]g. The enquiry of the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t is a very fishing one.

A. N.

I notice that Tewfik P[ash]a's commun[icatio]n is marked *strictly conf[idential] and private*. This rather debar us from commun[icatin]g it to the Quai d'Orsay—an exceedingly leaky dep[artmen]t—though the fact that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t are moving in the matter seems now publicly known.

A. N.

Circulate to Cabinet at once, most confidential. I will discuss it with Sir A. Nicolson to-morrow.

E. G.

7.12 11.

⁽¹⁾ [Endorsed. "Communicated by the Councillor of the Turkish Embassy, who said that the Ambassador would be grateful for Sir E. Grey's views. L. M."]

⁽²⁾ [cp *Parl. Deb.*, 5th Ser., (House of Commons), Vol. 82, p. 160]

Sir G. Lowther to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Constantinople, December 6, 1911.

In a conversation with Marschall he said that although the Turkish Government were somewhat exercised over the war with Italy, it was nothing compared to their

⁽¹⁾ [Carncek MSS., Vol. VI of 1911.]

anxiety over the question of the Straits which the Russians had put forward. He did not know what His Majesty's Government would think of it, but Lord Salisbury had always maintained that once the Turks gave way on this question their very existence was in danger. Of course Russia would rather let things remain as they were than allow the passage to be open to all Powers. I said I presumed that the permission would apply only in time of peace. He maintains that that would make no difference, for Russia would, if she were at war with Great Britain, and had a battle outside the Dardanelles, return inside and take possession of the forts and keep others out. In fact, if this were conceded, it was the beginning of the end of Constantinople, and Ambassadors could be replaced by Vice Consuls. He was convinced that Russia had determined to abandon the Baltic and would establish a large arsenal in the Black Sea and thus already counted on the privilege of passage being secured. Generally he was very gloomy and said the absolute disregard for Treaties, Conventions and the Law of Nations was a dangerous symptom of present day politics. . . . (2)

Yours ever.

GERALD LOWTHER.

(2) [The remaining paragraphs of the letter are chiefly concerned with a further conversation with Hilmi Pasha about the Bagdad Railway.]

No. 342.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.(1)

Vienna, December 7, 1911.

F.O. 49060/47832/11/7.

D. 6.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 191.)

R. 10 P.M.

Bulgaria.

Count von Aehrenthal told me that he had recently seen King of Bulgaria, and he thought latter, like his Government, was really pacific. As long as present Premier remained, Bulgaria would do nothing against Turkey. Count von Aehrenthal observed, however, that he had reason to believe, not the Italian Legation at Sophia, but independent Italian agents were carrying on an anti-Turkish propaganda amongst Bulgarian people, especially Beggstaalovist [*sic*: Stamboulloffist] party. He feared that with the spring an agitation would be begun against Turkey which might have disastrous results (see Sir H. Bax-Ironside's telegram No. 32).(2)

MINUTE.

It looks from Sir H. Bax-Ironside's telegram No. 32, that there may be some truth in Ct. Aehrenthal's suspicions. If the Italians are intriguing in the Balkans, it is a very short-sighted policy—and will give a pretext to Austria to intervene if that is her game (Sec 49057).(3)

L. M.
A. N.
E. G.

(1) [This telegram was sent to Sofia (as No. 8); to Constantinople (as No. 445).]

(2) [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated in Mr. Mallet's minute above. (F O. 42450/30691/11/44.)]

(3) [The reference is to Mr. Lampson's telegram No. 38, Secret, of December 7, 1911, D. 8.15 P.M., R. 10 P.M., in which he mentioned reports that Austrian intervention in Macedonia was feared. (F O. 49057/828/11/44.)]

No. 343.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Eduard Grey.⁽¹⁾

Vienna, December 7, 1911.

F.O. 49061/30691/11/44.

D. 8.51 P.M.

Tel. (No. 132.) Confidential.

R. 10 P.M.

Count von Aehrenthal told me to-day about general international situation. He began by expressing great satisfaction at recent military success of Italy in Tripoli. Prospects of peace were, however, as distant as before. Count von Aehrenthal said that his great preoccupation was how peace could be brought about which would not leave Turkey too weak to continue as one of the Great Powers. To weaken Turkey under present circumstances would be to destroy equilibrium in the Balkans; and lead to a crash. His Excellency's news from Macedonia was very bad.

Count von Aehrenthal then alluded to rumour that Russia meditated raising the Dardanelles question. He said if she did so this demand, like (*sic*) in Paris (and) London would be examined in Vienna in friendly spirit, but he would have to examine very carefully whether, under the present circumstances, Austrian interests would not be prejudiced by it.

Count von Aehrenthal was, however, of opinion that it would be unfortunate if Russia raised the question now, as this would open the door to other Powers coming forward with demands, and probably Greece would raise Cretan question again. If Turkey were forced to accede to these demands she would emerge so weakened from present crisis that it would be absurd for the Powers to assert that they wanted to maintain the *status quo* in Balkans. He hoped that French and British Governments would exert their influence with Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs to restrain Russian Government from raising the question of the Straits.

Count von Aehrenthal also alluded to Persian crisis. He said that Persian Minister here had frequently tried to induce him to speak out in defence of Persia.

He had steadily refused to do so, but he could not hide from me that, with every desire to be friendly to Russia, he must express regret at her recent action, and he hoped that His Majesty's Government would use their influence to restrain Russia from occupying Tehran, as that would signify practical absorption of north of Persia by Russia. This would soon mean establishment of Russian customs tariff against foreign goods, and this would touch Austrian economic interests.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 344); to St. Petersburg (as No. 788); to Constantinople (as No. 446); to Rome (as No. 287).]

No. 344.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 49640/30691/11/44.

Constantinople, D. December 10, 1911, 10.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 339.)

R. December 11, 1911, 11 A.M.

My telegram No. 326.⁽²⁾

Russian Ambassador has asked permission of his Gov[ernmen]t to communicate to my French colleague and myself copy of document handed to the M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] here which was under 6 headings. Presumably this will not,

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 337, No. 330.]

⁽³⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 312, No. 289.]

in face of M. Sazonow's denial, be given and seeing the manner in which proposal has been received here and inopportuneness of moment it is ? quite likely that it will be dropped.

MINUTE.

M. Sazonow's denial appeared in an interview published in *Le Temps*.

H. N.
L. M.
A. N.
E. G.

No. 345.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 50018/30691/11/44.

(No. 366.)

St. Petersburg, D. December 11, 1911.

Sir,

R. December 14, 1911.

I have the honour to report that the "Novoe Vremya" of Dec[ember] 8th publishes a leading article on statements which have appeared in the Austrian Press, to the effect that the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople has approached the Turkish Government on the question of the opening of the Straits. The "Novoe Vremya" is authoritatively assured that Russia has made no official representations in the matter but at the same time it considers it not unlikely that, now that Turkey is down, M. Tcharykoff has desired to offer her a helping hand. In these circumstances the natural return for Turkey to make would be to offer to open the Bosphorus and Dardanelles to the Russian fleet. "We believe that Russia does not need this diplomatic success which would have no real value. Nowadays, paper Treaties are useless. The only conditions on which such an arrangement would be of any value to us would be if our fleet were at liberty to have free access to and from the Mediterranean and other fleets were not. Turkey could not give us this. If we were to demand the free passage of the Dardanelles, all the other Signatories of the Treaty of Paris of 1856 and of the Treaty of London of 1871⁽²⁾ would demand compensation."

The article goes on to remark that Germany's interests in Persia were infinitesimal and yet she had to be bought off there by an undertaking that the Tehran-Khanikin railway would be built by a certain date. What would be the price of her consent to the opening of the Dardanelles?

The article closes by expressing the opinion that the opening of the Dardanelles question at the present moment would serve no good purpose. The Russian Foreign Office is not raising the question and for once the "Novoe Vremya" can approve its inaction.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

MINUTE.

M. Tcharykoff's move has been a conspicuous failure as far as the Dardanelles are concerned.

H. N.
L. M.
A. N.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this despatch were sent to the Admiralty and to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 331-3, No. 322, mins.; p. 341, No. 336, mins.]

No. 346.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 50221/30691/11/44.

(No. 381.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 12, 1911.

The Turkish Ambassador called to-day and was informed, with regard to the proposals put forward by the Russian Ambassador in Constantinople, that the free passage of commercial ships through the Dardanelles was a thing in which we were all interested, and which we all desired to see preserved: we therefore could not have any objection to an arrangement with Russia that would secure this free passage.

As to opening the Straits to ships of war, I had promised M. Iswolsky in 1908⁽²⁾ that we would not oppose the raising of this question, if Russia wished to raise it. But, in so far as this opening would require an alteration of Treaties, it was a question which must be discussed with the Powers who were parties to the Treaties.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY]

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 308, No. 284, note ⁽²⁾, and p. 311, *Ed. note*]

No. 347.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 50100/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 345.)

*Pera, D. December 13, 1911, 10.50 P.M.**R. December 14, 1911, 8 A.M.*

My telegram No. 339 of Dec[ember] 10:⁽²⁾ Russia and Straits.

Minister for Foreign Affairs told me that in view of what he considered to be disavowal by Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs of action of Russian Ambassador here, he proposed to tell his Excellency to-day that he regarded proposals as dropped.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (by bag); to St. Petersburg (as No. 322); to Vienna (as No. 161); to Berlin (as No. 242); with No. 339.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 348-9, No. 344]

No. 348.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 50169/48554/11/44.

Tel. (No. 350.)

Pera, December 14, 1911.

D. 7.15 P.M.

R. 10.15 P.M.

Russian Ambassador last night told Minister for Foreign Affairs that in view of present condition of affairs Russia did not wish to put forward at this moment any proposal the acceptance of which might be considered by Turkey as embarrassing, and that the question of passage of Straits might be eliminated, though he was prepared to continue his conversations on other five points of programme he had submitted.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 374); to Berlin (as No. 245); to Vienna (as No. 103); to St. Petersburg (as No. 324); to Rome (as No. 319).]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 348-9, No. 344.]

IV.—PEACE FEELERS AND NEGOTIATIONS, DECEMBER 12, 1911—OCTOBER 15, 1912.

No. 349.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 50815/50815/11/22.

(No. 285.)

Sir,

Rome, D. December 12, 1911.

R. December 16, 1911.

I have had an opportunity to read in the print sections which reached me yesterday Sir F. Cartwright's despatch No. 202 of the 2nd instant,⁽¹⁾ in which he draws attention to statements published in the Austrian journal, the "Reichspost," regarding alleged pourparlers initiated by the French Ambassador in Rome between the French and Italian Governments, having for their object the abandonment of the Triple Alliance by Italy. Monsieur Barrère has as a matter of fact now been absent from Rome for some six weeks, presiding over the sanitary conference at Paris. The detachment of Italy from her German and Austrian allies has always been his ambition, and I have little doubt that his influence has been exerted at Paris in promoting the friendly spirit which the French press has exhibited towards this country since the outbreak of war, but [he] would be the last man to have urged that the subject should be openly broached between the Governments at a moment when he had reason to believe that the unassisted trend of circumstances will before long make such a consummation probable. Such is at any rate the impression I have derived from many conversations just before his departure for Paris.

In view of the struggle in which Italy is engaged it is self-evident that her policy must be to refrain from affording Austria any ground of provocation, and she has every reason to appreciate the attitude which Count Aehrenthal has hitherto maintained. It is probably the recognition of this necessity which has kept the Italian press under control, and, in its constantly expressed indignation at the criticisms of foreign journals on the declaration of war and the mode of its conduct, there has been much less reference to Austria than to Germany. It is, in fact, the northern ally which at the present moment has incurred the fullest measure of general unpopularity.

In spite however of the cordial dislike and distrust which Germany has succeeded in inspiring, and the traditional sentiments towards Austria which circumstances render it politic to hold in restraint it is probable that if the moment had now arrived for the extension of the alliance, Italy would agree to the renewal. Whether or not she will eventually do so must largely depend upon the development of events in the coming year. It is at any rate, I am convinced, altogether premature to assert that her statesmen have as yet taken into practical consideration a modification of the actual grouping of the European Powers.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

MINUTES.

What Italy will decide when the Triple Alliance comes up for renewal is impossible to foretell, but the decision will be based on purely practical grounds and not on sentimental.

It seems to me to be preferable that she should continue as a somewhat doubtful factor in the alliance than that she should be in open opposition to Austria and Germany.

E. D.

18.12.11.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 48614/48614/11/3.)]

Italy's decision will however be largely influenced by the attitude of her two partners. It is quite conceivable that Germany may make unpalatable conditions.

E. A. C.
Dec[ember] 18
W. L.
A. N.
E. G.

No. 350.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

St. Petersburg, December 26, 1911.

F.O. 51479/30691/11/44.

D. 3.59 P.M.

Tel. (No. 350.) Confidential.

R. 6.15 P.M.

Minister for Foreign Affairs asked me to call on him yesterday, and, as I was indisposed, he saw Mr. O'Beirne. After expressing serious apprehensions of complications arising in the Balkans should the Turco-Italian conflict continue until the spring, he said that he had a proposal to make on which he was anxious to have your views. The difference between the pretensions of the two combatants appeared, as a matter of law, to be irreconcilable. A solution must therefore be sought on a *de facto* basis. His suggested solution was that an armistice should be declared; that Turkey should not be asked to sign any treaty with Italy (which would necessarily involve cession of Tripoli), but that she should simply withdraw her troops. Italy would thereupon pay Turkey an indemnity, and the Powers would severally recognise the annexation of Tripoli by Italy.

Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs said that he had sounded the Italian Government, and had reason to think that they would entertain his proposal. As regards Turkey, it would be necessary that a "friendly but very serious pressure" should be exercised by Europe collectively.

It should be pointed out to Turkey that Tripoli was virtually lost to her, and that a continuance of the struggle would involve her in serious financial difficulties, and would endanger the peace of Europe. In dealing with Turkey, the mandatory of the Powers should be France, though here his Excellency anticipated difficulties from the side of Germany.

He had given an outline of his suggestion to the German and Austrian Ambassadors so that those two Powers might not complain that they had been left aside; but to carry it through he counted chiefly on the support of England and France. He would gladly welcome any improvement on his idea that you might suggest.

As your despatch No. 332, Secret,⁽²⁾ did not instruct me to make any communication to the Russian Government concerning the Netherlands Government's proposal, Mr. O'Beirne did not refer to this subject.

MINUTE.

I shall await the office minutes on this⁽³⁾ but it seems to me to be very undesirable to manœuvre the three Powers—France, Russia and ourselves—into the position of putting pressure upon Turkey. If anything is done it should be by collective action at Constantinople. Turkey will probably ask then that if she accepts the action of the Powers they should guarantee her against trouble in the Balkans and they should be prepared with some answer to that request. I reserve my final opinion however till tomorrow.

E. G.
27.12.11.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 396). Copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. infra*, p. 354, *Ed. note*. The despatch was repeated to St. Petersburg as No. 337.]

⁽³⁾ [Sir Edward Grey's minute was written on a separate minute sheet. The result of the "office minutes" (which it has not been thought necessary to reproduce) is seen in the two telegrams immediately following which were drafted at the end of the minutes in Sir Edward Grey's own hand.]

No. 351.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 51479/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 866.)

*Foreign Office, December 29, 1911.*Your telegram No. 350⁽²⁾

You may inform M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] of what has passed with Netherlands Gov[ernment]. My personal opinion at present is that it would be impolitic to put any pressure at Constantinople except by collective or at least simultaneous action of all five Powers. Otherwise there is danger that three Powers may be manœuvred into an invidious position at Constantinople of which Germany and Austria may take advantage. Pressure applied by three Powers only might fail and other two Powers might then intervene and arrange terms really or apparently more favourable to Turkey than first proposal of three Powers.

Even if Turkey is disposed to yield to pressure it is probable that she will as condition of taking advice of Powers ask them to guarantee her European possessions. This would be a serious responsibility and an embarrassing one if recent Turkish methods of government in Macedonia continued. You may submit these considerations to M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] and ask whether he has yet taken them into account. Meanwhile I will suspend final opinion on his proposal.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 396).]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 352.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 51479/30691/11/44.

Tel. (No. 867.) Confidential.

Foreign Office, December 29, 1911.

I am alive to risk of complications in the Balkans in the spring and they would be most unwelcome, but the risk is one primarily for Turkey to consider. Russia and Austria are the two great Powers most directly concerned. Extent to which complications in Balkans would be embarrassing to Europe generally would depend upon whether Russia and Austria could agree as to limits of their action and nature of settlement, but I am doubtful of its being discreet to suggest to Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] an agreement with Austria.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 397).]

⁽²⁾ [Marginal comment by Sir Edward Grey:—

“Repeat both my telegrams to Sir F. Bertie—tell him to inform French Government of the first telegram and ask their view of the Russian proposal.

Leave it to Bertie's discretion whether to say anything to the French about my “confidential” telegram.

E. G.”

Sir Edward Grey's telegram No. 395 to Sir F. Bertie, of December 29, gave instructions in accordance with this note. (F.O. 51479/30691/11/44.)]

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

St. Petersburg, December 31, 1911.

F.O. 4/4/12/44.

D. 3 P.M.

Tel. (No. 347.) Very Confidential.

R. 7 P.M.

Your telegram No. 866⁽²⁾ and your telegram No. 867.⁽³⁾

Minister for Foreign Affairs considers Dutch proposal far too vague, and does not think an attempt at mediation by Netherlands Government would carry any weight.

As regards his own proposal, he never intended to suggest that pressure should be applied at Constantinople except by Europe collectively. He has not yet received replies from Austrian and German Governments.

On my enquiring as to the present state of Austro-Russian relations, he said that Austria was still regarded with great suspicion here. He would tell me in strict confidence that Count Aehrenthal had recently reproached him through the Russian Ambassador at Vienna with having made no mention of Austria in interview which he gave to correspondent of "Novoe Vremya" on his return from Paris (see my despatch No. 375.⁽⁴⁾) He had, his Excellency continued, purposely made this statement, as he did not consider that a demonstration of friendship for Austria would have been well received here at present. He had himself no reason to doubt Count Aehrenthal's good faith, and he had instructed Russian Ambassador to take an opportunity of giving his Excellency suitable assurances on the subject. Emperor of Austria, however, might die at any moment, and it was impossible to say who Count Aehrenthal's successor would be or what would be his policy.

I asked whether he contemplated, in the event of Balkan situation becoming threatening, approaching the Austrian Government with a view to coming to an understanding. He replied that he would have no objection to entering into a conversation with Vienna, but that he did not see use of concluding a fresh understanding, as the arrangement negotiated in the spring of last year recognised the principle of *status quo* and of free development in Balkan States (see Sir A. Nicolson's despatch No. 146, 1910).⁽⁵⁾ He did not think that it would be possible to go further than this.

(1) [This telegram was sent to Constantinople (as No. 4); to Rome (as No. 1) on January 1. Also to Vienna on January 4. Copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

(2) [v. *supra*, p. 353, No. 351.]

(3) [v. immediately preceding document.]

(4) [Not reproduced, as the tenour is sufficiently indicated above. Despatch No. 375 of December 15, 1911 (F.O. 50504/50504/11/38)]

(5) [v. *supra*, p. 150, No. 143.]

[ED. NOTE.—The proposal of the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs is described in Sir Edward Grey's despatch to Sir A. Johnstone, No. 82 of December 13, 1911 (F.O. 50286/30691/11/44). The proposals were quite indefinite. They had been made in the first place at Paris, then at Berlin and at Vienna. No specific terms were suggested, but the Netherlands Government was described as a suitable mediator as being free from *arrière-pensée* and possessing 80 million Mohammedan subjects. Sir Edward Grey's attitude is indicated in the following paragraph of the despatch.—

"I said that a few weeks ago Count Aehrenthal had moved in the matter, and the five Great Powers had come to the conclusion that there was no opening for mediation then. But they had agreed to keep in touch and to continue to watch the situation, so that if any of them had reason to think that mediation would be possible they would be able to act together in the matter. Not one of us had so far obtained any information to indicate that mediation was opportune or possible yet. The question of sovereignty over Tripoli was still the obstacle. Italy had given it to be clearly understood that she would leave no festige of Turkish sovereignty over Tripoli. Turkey did not see why she should give up her

sovereignty. Speaking my own personal opinion, I could say that we were so anxious for peace that we would not offer objection to any form of mediation that was likely to secure it. Should there be any opportunity for mediation, and should it appear that this opportunity could be utilised or improved by the good offices of the Netherlands Government, we would be delighted that they should offer their good offices."']

No. 354.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 488/4/12/44.

Rome, D. January 3, 1912, 8.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 1.)

R. January 4, 1912, 8 A.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 1 [of January 1].⁽²⁾

The difficulty presented by the Russian proposal from the Italian point of view will I think be found in the declaration of an armistice. I understand that armistice would not prevent belligerents from consolidating positions and obtaining fresh supplies. In view of Italian situation in Cyrenaica where they hold coast ports while much of the high ground in the neighbourhood to some extent commanding the coast is open to the enemy, armistice would be less advantageous to them than a continuance of hostilities and I do not think that they could be induced to accept the proposal unless the withdrawal of Turkish troops were simultaneous with declaration, which Turks would have difficulty in accepting. But for this I think that proposal would be welcome here.

The best chance of inducing Turkey to accept logic of facts on the de facto basis would seem to be that she should realise that the Great Powers were all acting together and it might be possible as a preliminary step to obtain their agreement to a collective or simultaneous representation to the effect that it had now become apparent that the African provinces were lost to the Empire and that with a view to preventing further bloodshed they were prepared to examine together how a cessation of hostilities might be brought about without Turkey signing any (gr[ou]p undecy[phera]ble) implying cession. Unanimity of the Powers would give Gov[ernmen]t support in (? convincing) public opinion.

This point established, Powers would be able to proceed to further steps in the sense of proposal.

Russian Embassy has laid proposal before M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] but has not received any answer officially as he had to consult the Crown and his colleagues. He however represented difficulty presented by armistice.

MINUTES.

I think, as observed on 475,⁽³⁾ that after the Turkish elections w[ould] be the most favourable moment for mediation. It is a pity that we do not know the date of those elections, but Sir G. Lowther speaks now of their "eve." The sooner they are held the better, because with the spring comes the danger of complications. But there is still a margin of time.

I do not think the Italian objection in para[graph] 1 is very grave. The Turco-Arab forces cannot obtain supplies on any considerable scale from any source. They have practically no artillery left and without that positions cannot be formidably consolidated. In fact time is likely to produce quite the contrary result on the composite force's situation. Supplies will, if anything, get shorter, and discord between the Arabs and Turks may well increase. In fact the real difficulty of mediation lies at Constantinople not at Rome. And as to the latter it may be borne in mind that the position of mediator was, early in the war, pledged to Germany.

R. G. V.

Jan[uary] 4.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to St. Petersburg (as No. 12); to Paris (as No. 109); to Constantinople (as No. 8). Copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document and note ⁽¹⁾. This telegram also asked Sir R. Rodd for his observations on the Russian plan.]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced. It is telegram No. 1 of January 3, 1912, D. 1 P.M., R. 8 P.M., from Sir G. Lowther. It suggested that it was "very unlikely that present Government would agree to any terms that involved what would practically amount to sale of a province on the eve of a general election." Mr. Parker minuted the telegram that it would be better to wait until after the elections. (F.O. 475/4/12/44.)]

We must clearly not encourage mediation when, as at present, all efforts seem foredoomed to failure.

A. P.

The Russian proposal is evidently not practicable.

R. P. M.

I think it is clear that an attempt at mediation, at the present moment, would be to court failure. After the Turkish elections, we shall know more and be in a better position to judge. You will doubtless talk this question over with M. Cambon on Monday when something can be sent to Sir G. Buchanan.

L. M.

Since writing this, I have seen the Italian Ambassador. He is anxious to see you on Monday and you might like to do so, before Cambon's visit, as he tells me that the Italian Gov[ernment]t have received indirectly indication that Turkey is ready to make peace. He did not give me details but I gather that the proposal is that of which we have heard namely that Turkey should declare Tripoli independent and I don't suppose there is much in it.

L. M.

E. G.

No. 355.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 687/4/12/44.

(No. 8.) Confidential.

Sir,

Paris, D. January 3, 1912.

R. January 5, 1912.

Monsieur de Selves gave me an account this evening of the interview which, as I informed you in my despatch No. 4 of January 1st,⁽¹⁾ the Russian Ambassador was to have with him yesterday and of a conversation which he had with the Italian Ambassador this afternoon.

M. Isvolski informed M. de Selves that the Russian Government being apprehensive of trouble in the Balkan Peninsula in the spring if the war between Italy and Turkey were prolonged had been considering by what means it could be brought to an early conclusion and had devised a scheme on which he had been instructed to seek the opinion of the French Government. The Ambassador then described M. Sazonow's proposal such as it was communicated to you⁽²⁾ and he said that the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs would be ready to consider any modifications in the proposal which the French Government might desire to suggest in it. If they concurred in it as it stood or with modifications it would be fitting that France should bring it to the notice of the Porte. Monsieur de Selves, who said that he had heard rumours of the existence of a scheme of the nature of the one described, asked whether it had been concurred in by the Italian Government. M. Isvolski replied that there was good reason to believe that it would be accepted by the Italian Government, and as to the Porte it might be necessary to use friendly but firm pressure at Constantinople in order to obtain the acceptance of the scheme, and the

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It describes an interview between Sir F. Bertie and M. de Selves on January 1, at which Sir F. Bertie communicated the Russian proposal reported in Sir G. Buchanan's telegram No. 350 of December 26 and the tenour of Sir Edward Grey's views (*v. supra*, pp. 352-3, Nos. 350-1), and asked for the opinion of M. de Selves. In his reply M. de Selves referred to conversations which had been taking place between the Italian, Russian and German Ambassadors, and suggested that M. Tittoni might have been concerned in the Russian proposal. He concurred with Sir Edward Grey's views. Sir F. Bertie referred also to the possibility of an agreement between Russia and Austria-Hungary as to their interests in the Balkans, a possibility which M. de Selves thought carried with it the danger of Franco-British isolation. (F.O. 493/4/12/44.) Upon this despatch Sir Edward Grey wrote the following minute:—

“ Unless Russia and Austria keep in touch there may be war. The working agreement about the Balkans that they had before the annexation of Bosnia did not impair the relations of Russia with France. France was only lukewarm in supporting Russia when M. Isvolsky and Count Aehrenthal quarrelled. E. G.”]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 352, No. 350.]

intervention of France as a preliminary to joint or separate action by the Powers would be most desirable.

Monsieur de Selves then observed that it behoved the Russian and French Governments to proceed very warily in such a matter. The German Government had continually represented at the Porte that the troubles of Turkey were due to the action of the French Government in Morocco. Quite recently they had given the Porte to understand that the advance of funds which, as M. Isvolski must know, the Turkish Government were seeking to obtain at Paris was being withheld owing to opposition from the French Government, which was not true. It would not at all suit them that the German Government should have an opportunity of putting it to the Turkish Government that they were prompted by unfriendly feelings towards Turkey, 'which might be said if they supported a proposal which would result in Italy remaining in possession of Tripoli on terms very advantageous to her. M. Sazonow's scheme would require very careful consideration, which it would certainly receive from the French Government, and it would be necessary to confer with other Powers, for it would not be expedient to act without their co-operation; for those of them who stood aloof might make use of such action to further their own interests with the Porte. To M. de Selves' enquiry as to whether the scheme had been communicated to you and, if so what your opinion on it was, M. Isvolski replied that he had no doubt that your opinion was being sought but that he did not know what it was. M. de Selves told His Excellency that he would renew the discussion with him after he had ascertained the personal opinion of the French Ambassador at Constantinople as to how the scheme would be regarded there.

M. de Selves began the conversation with the Italian Ambassador by asking whether he had any news as to the progress of the military operations and how soon they would be likely to have some effect on the attitude of Turkey. M. Tittoni thereupon produced a paper from his pocket and proceeded to describe a proposal which he said had been put forward by the Russian Government. To M. de Selves' enquiry as to whether the proposal—which was the one communicated by the Russian Ambassador—would be acceptable to the Italian Government and whether M. Tittoni thought it likely that the Porte could be induced to agree to it, His Excellency replied that he did not know the views of the Italian Government, but that personally he thought it acceptable, and that the Porte could be brought to accept it by friendly but very firm pressure by the Powers, and for the purpose of ensuring the co-operation of all the Powers at Constantinople the intervention of the French Government in London and of the German Government at Vienna would be desirable and likely to be efficacious in prevailing on the British and Austro-Hungarian Governments to join with the Russian and French Governments in putting friendly but firm pressure on the Porte to accept the scheme.

M. de Selves is convinced that the scheme was inspired by M. Tittoni and recommended to M. Sazonow by M. Isvolski. He hears that M. Tittoni is minded to bring about an understanding between Italy, Russia and Austria which would be a species of alliance on the Balkan question supported by Germany.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

MINUTES.

The last paragraph is important. An agreement between Austria, Italy and Russia as to the Balkans would certainly be very desirable, as in its absence, war will be almost inevitable on the death of the Emperor of Austria.

It is a question which ought to be thoroughly discussed either here or in Paris and M. de Selves' observations to Sir F. Bertie give an opening.

If the result were to throw Russia on the side of Germany and to weaken the understanding with us and the Treaty with France, we should abstain from promoting it but such an agreement as is proposed would necessarily be an International one, as it would entail the revision of the Treaty of Berlin and altho[ugh] the object would be defeated if the matter were discussed at an international conference, for Germany would then certainly demand blackmail for her

acquiescence in any arrangements which might be proposed, the adhesion of the Powers could be arranged for afterwards and in this way the danger which M. de Selves fears, might be averted.

The risk of a war in which Russia were a principal and in which public opinion here would not allow us to intervene on her side presents to my mind far greater dangers to the maintenance of the present grouping of the European Powers.

L. M.

I have written privately to Sir F. Bertie on this point ⁽³⁾

E. G

⁽³⁾ [*v infra*, pp. 527-8, No 537]

No. 356.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 1593/4/12/44.

(No. 10.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 8, 1912.

The Italian Ambassador came to see me to-day, and asked me what I thought of the Russian proposals for bringing to an end the war between Italy and Turkey. His own information was that the Turks were becoming desirous of peace, and that some pressure might even be welcome to them. They had begun to talk of declaring the independence of Tripoli, and the Powers might perhaps find out what terms would be acceptable to the Turks in the form, for instance, of money compensation. There could then be an armistice, of which it would be a condition that the Turks should withdraw their troops; and finally the Powers could recognise the annexation of Tripoli, though there need be no mention of Tripoli in any treaty between Turkey and Italy.

I said that the Russian proposals were somewhat vague, but my information was that the Turks were not at present prepared to go so far as Russia suggested. In any case, any action taken by the five Powers should be collective, they should use identical language, and act with equal decision if anything at all was done.

The Ambassador asked me whether I should be opposed to applying pressure to the Porte. He agreed entirely as to action by the five Powers being collective, and as to identical language being essential; and he thought it a mistake in the Russian proposals that a special rôle had been assigned to France.

I replied that "pressure" was a vague term, which might mean all sorts of things. It would be easy enough to help the Turks towards an object which they desired; but to force them along a road which they did not wish to follow, and to recognise the annexation of Tripoli in the face of Turkish protests would be a departure from neutrality.

The Ambassador told me that Herr Zimmermann, in Berlin, had expressed himself to the Italian Ambassador as favourable to the Russian proposals; he heard that Count Aehrenthal was favourable also, and M. de Selves had spoken hopefully to Signor Tittoni.

I said that I did not think Count Aehrenthal had been very hopeful, and I did not yet know the German view at all.

The Ambassador asked me whether if Germany and all the other Powers were in favour of using pressure at Constantinople it would alter my view as to the use of pressure. I replied that I would take the views of the other Powers into consideration when I knew them. I did not wish to be an obstacle to agreement between the five Powers.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch was repeated to Paris (No. 19), to St. Petersburg (No. 8) on January 11.]

No. 357.

Mr. T. Russell to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Vienna, January 10, 1912.

F.O. 1413/4/12/44.

D. 2.2 P.M.

Tel. (No. 4.)

R. 2.35 P.M.

Tripoli.

I learn that Count Aehrenthal has informed the Russian Government through the Austrian Ambassador at St. Petersburg that he agrees in principle to Russian proposal of mediation between Italy and Turkey. To the Russian Ambassador he has so far made no statement to that effect, in spite of promise to communicate with him the moment the Austro-Hungarian Government were in a position to take a decision.

(¹) [This telegram was sent to Rome (as No 8); to Constantinople (as No 12), to Paris (as No. 7); to St. Petersburg (as No 23) Copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 358.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

St. Petersburg, January 10, 1912.

F.O. 1423/4/12/44.

D. 6 P.M.

Tel. (No. 5.)

R. 7.15 P.M.

Your telegram No. 1. [] to Berlin.⁽²⁾

Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs tells me that he hears from Berlin that Germany does not view with favour idea of French mandate. He quite approves of the suggestion that the French and German Ambassadors should receive a joint mandate to speak in the name of other Powers. Turkish Ambassador has asked him whether reports which had reached Porte of his Excellency's mediation proposals were correct, and, on being informed that they were, said that Turkey could never accept a settlement that was based solely on the payment of an indemnity.

MINUTES.

I do not think any further steps are required on our part for the moment.

A. N.

Wait for the present.

E. G.

(¹) [This telegram was sent to Paris (by bag); to Rome (as No. 10); to Constantinople (as No. 14); to Berlin (as No. 1); to Vienna (as No. 3)]

(²) [Not reproduced. The description is inaccurate (*cp. infra*, p. 361, No. 360, *min.*). It should be "Telegram No. 1 of January 6, from Berlin." This was sent to St. Petersburg (as No. 20). It mentioned the Italian Ambassador's disapproval of the idea of a French mandate, and his preference to collective or simultaneous representation to the Porte by all the five Powers. (F.O. 985/4/12/44.)]

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

Sofia, January 11, 1912.

F.O. 1579/1579/12/44.

D. 3.45 P.M.

Tel. (No. 2.) Very Confidential.

R. 5.45 P.M.

Turco-Italian war. My telegram No. 44 of 23rd December.⁽²⁾

Turkish Minister informs me that he has received a personal telegram from Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs to the effect that, although he is unable to see Italian Minister personally at Sophia, if the latter will call on Turkish Legation Turkish Minister is to receive sympathetically any fresh proposals that Italian Minister may be prepared to make.

A high official at Bulgarian Foreign Office acts as intermediary.

Turkish Minister further states that he is categorically given to understand that he is not authorised to accept any proposals on behalf of his Government but merely to transmit them. He is of the opinion that Italian Minister will not call on Turkish Legation and that negotiations will prove abortive. He is the more inclined to this view, as he has received a private letter from the same quarter stating that Italian conditions have so far been entirely unacceptable.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence, to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It referred to the proposal for a personal meeting between the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Italian Minister at Sofia. (F.O. 51482/80691/11/44)]

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 1895/4/12/44.

(No. 12.)

St. Petersburg, D. January 11, 1912.

Sir,

R. January 15, 1912.

I mentioned to Monsieur Sazonow yesterday what the Italian Ambassador had said to you, as reported in your telegram No. 1 to Sir E. Goschen of January 6,⁽¹⁾ respecting the Russian proposal for collective action by the Powers at Rome and Constantinople, with a view to bring about a settlement of the Turco-Italian war.

His Excellency informed me that he had heard from Berlin that the idea of a French mandate was not at all pleasing to the German Government, and that he thought that Marquis Imperiali's⁽²⁾ suggestion—that France and Germany should receive a joint mandate to speak in the name of the other Powers—a very good one. His Excellency added that, though all the Powers had expressed themselves favourable in principle to his proposal, none of them had as yet returned a definite reply. The Turkish Ambassador had recently asked him whether the reports which had reached the Porte respecting the proposed mediation were correct, and had declared that Turkey would never consent to a settlement under which she was obliged to part with one of her Arab provinces in return for a money payment. Turkhan Pasha had, His Excellency said, laid great stress on the effect which such a procedure would have on the remaining Arab provinces.

Monsieur Sazonow then proceeded to say that if Turkhan Pasha's language represented the views held by his Government, it was not unlikely that the Powers might meet with a "fin de non recevoir" at Constantinople. In that case it would be necessary for them to consider what further steps they should take to bring more serious pressure to bear on the Porte. He agreed with me in thinking that, until the new Turkish elections were over, we should not be able to accomplish much; but we

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. *cp. supra*, p. 359, No. 358, note ⁽²⁾.]

⁽²⁾ [*sic*: Signor Pansa's. The error is due to the confusion indicated in Mr. Vansittart's minute on the next page.]

had still several months before the spring brought with it the danger of risings in Albania and Macedonia. He personally thought that we might eventually have to tell the Turks that we could not allow the cause of general peace to be jeopardised by a prolonged continuation of the present war; that if they now refused to consider the question of an indemnity, Italy might decline to pay one later on; and that the Powers might find themselves forced to regulate the situation without Turkey, by recognising the Italian annexation of Tripoli. This was a course of action which the Powers might have to take into consideration later on; and it would, in his opinion, probably prove effective provided that all of them, including Austria and Germany, would agree to adopt it.

I remarked that even should he succeed in inducing Austria and Germany to act as he had suggested, those Powers would not fail to let the Porte know that the proposal had originated with Russia, and that consequently she would have to bear the brunt of all the odium which it was sure to provoke at Constantinople.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

MINUTES

(Sir G. Buchanan makes the same confusion as in his tel[egram] No 5.⁽³⁾ He means Sir E. Goschen's tel[egram] No. 1, repeated to Petersburg. It was not the Italian Ambassador here but the Italian Ambassador in Berlin who made the suggestion. Is it worth correcting the impression. It sh[oul]d become clear to him from the sections.)⁽⁴⁾

[R. G. V.]

Yes.

A. P.

The suggestion on p 2 seems impossible: The result foreshadowed in the last para[graph] of this desp[atch] w[oul]d certainly come to pass, and we and France w[oul]d be tarred at Constantinople with the same brush as the Russians.

R. G. V.

A. P.

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 359, No. 358, and note ⁽²⁾.]

⁽⁴⁾ [In accordance with a note by Mr. Maxwell the first paragraph of the despatch was altered before it was printed.]

No. 361.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.

F.O. 2233/4/12/44.

(No. 13.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 12, 1912.

M. de Etter enquired of Sir A. Nicolson to-day, by instructions, whether H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] had any proposal to make or any addition to suggest in respect to M. Sazonow's mediation project.

He said that, so far as he knew, neither France nor Germany had stated whether they were willing to act as joint mandatories in taking steps at Constantinople. Sir A. Nicolson told M. de Etter that our view was that all the Powers should act together at Con[stantino]ple and at Rome—but that until we knew what were the views of all the Powers, especially those of the German Gov[ernmen]t, we had nothing to propose. Sir A. Nicolson said that his personal opinion was that the moment was not opportune for making tentative efforts at mediation—but that we should be quite ready to participate in any collective action which assisted towards

the conclusion of peace. An essential condition however was that all the Powers should be thoroughly and sincerely in accord.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

MINUTE.

This is all we can say at present.

E G

No. 362.

Mr. T. Russell to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Vienna, January 13, 1912.

F.O. 1872/4/12/44.

D. 4.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 5.)

R. 7 P.M.

Tripoli.

My immediately preceding telegram.⁽²⁾

Count Aehrenthal told the Russian Ambassador last night that though he had agreed in principle to the Russian proposal he did not think that time was yet ripe for mediation. He added that Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, who had been the original author of the Russian scheme, had himself now expressed the opinion that it would be futile to proceed with it, as it would never be accepted at Constantinople. Count Aehrenthal does not think either that the Italian Government would consent to pay indemnity. In reply to enquiry in regard to prospects of the Russian proposal from the Italian Ambassador yesterday, Count Aehrenthal remarked somewhat caustically that the Italians would do better to drive the Turks out of Tripoli, and to render their annexation effective before bothering about mediation.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (by bag); to Rome (as No. 11); to Constantinople (as No. 15), to St. Petersburg (as No. 28); to Berlin (as No. 2). Copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 359, No. 357.]

No. 363.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

St. Petersburg, January 14, 1912.

F.O. 1867/4/12/44.

D. 8.45 P.M.

Tel. (No. 12.)

R. 10.30 P.M.

My telegram No. 9 of January 12⁽²⁾: War and mediation.

Minister for Foreign Affairs told me yesterday that, though Austria and Germany had accepted his mediation proposal in principle, he had reason to believe that Germany was working in a contrary sense. He had learnt confidentially that German Ambassador at Constantinople, when asked for his views, had replied that Turkey "cannot and ought not to accept it."

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (by bag); to Rome (as No. 12); to Constantinople (as No. 16), to Vienna (as No. 4); to Berlin (as No. 3). Copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [This telegram (D. 2.34 P.M., R. 2.45 P.M.) stated that Sir G. Buchanan had been informed on January 10 by M. Sazonov that "all the Powers had expressed themselves (in) favour of the proposal [of mediation] in principle." (F.O. 1710/4/12/44.)]

MINUTE

If Germany opposes the scheme, it must be dropped, because it is essential that she sh[oul]d share the onus of recommending surrender at Constantinople if she is to get the chief credit at Rome.

R. G. V.
Jan[uary] 15
A. P.
R. P. M.
H. N.
A. N.
E. G.

No. 364.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 2544/4/12/44.

(No. 28.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 20, 1912.

On the 15th inst[ant] M. Cambon gave to Sir A. Nicolson a summary of a batch of telegrams which he had received in regard to the Russian proposal for mediation between Turkey and Italy.

The only points of interest were that Baron Mars[c]hall had told M. Bompard that it would be an "infamy" for Turkey to be asked to recognise the Annexation,⁽¹⁾ and that mediation could not be thought of unless the Giolitti Cabinet were to resign and the decree announcing the Annexation were withdrawn.⁽²⁾ Baron Marschall also said that he had inspired an article in the "Tanin" stating that Turkey could not and should not recognise the Annexation.

The German Ambass[ado]r at St. Petersburg had stated that if any mediation were to take place it should be conducted by each Power separately.⁽³⁾

Sir A. Nicolson told M. Cambon that it seemed to him that the Russian proposal could not, in the circum[stan]ces, be proceeded with, and that the matter must be postponed to a more favourable opportunity. M. Cambon agreed.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

MINUTE.

We now know the line that the German Gov[ernmen]t or at any rate their Ambassador at Constantinople is taking. A hint of it may be useful when Imperiali next presses us to intervene

E. G.

(¹) [*cp. D.D.F., 3^{me} Sér., Vol. I, pp. 446-7, No. 436; p. 448, No. 437.*]

(²) [*cp. ib., p. 453, No. 443.*]

(³) [*cp. ib., p. 469, No. 453; p. 473, No. 458.*]

No. 365.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 4463/4463/12/44

(No. 37.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 29, 1912.

The French Amb[assado]r informed Sir A. Nicolson to-day that M. Iswolsky had informed M. Poincaré that his Gov[ernmen]t wished to keep in the closest possible touch with the French Gov[ernmen]t in respect to the serious developments which might shortly occur in the Near East, as the Russian Gov[ernmen]t were seriously preoccupied at the outlook of affairs. M. Poincaré had replied that he would always be happy to exchange views with the Russian Gov[ernmen]t. He had telegraphed to the French Amb[assado]r at St. P[etersburg] to ascertain whether the Russian Gov[ernmen]t had any special cause for uneasiness, and to try to find out whether

they had entered into any agreement with Austria or Germany in respect to affairs in the Near East.

M. Cambon asked Sir A. Nicolson whether we had heard anything which would lead us to believe that something serious was impending in the near east. Sir A. Nicolson replied that beyond the usual ominous prophecies of what would happen in the spring and the general unsettled condition in the Near East, we had not any very special or immediate cause for uneasiness.

M. Cambon said that M. de Kiderlen had informed the Turkish Amb[assado]r at Berlin—that he had told, when at Rome, the Italian Prime Min[ister] and M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that so long as the decree of the annexation of Tripoli was not modified or withdrawn there was no opportunity for mediation. Both Italian statesmen had replied that it was impossible to withdraw or modify the decree.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 366.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 5856/4468/12/44.

(No. 53.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 3, 1912.

M. Cambon having referred to-day, in connection with the Russian circular as to the Turco-Italian war,⁽¹⁾ to a Russian proposal which I have not so far received that England, France, and Russia should consult as to what action should be taken at Sofia and Constantinople to avert danger in the Balkans, I explained that the Russian communication to us had not dealt with this point at all, but had been entirely concerned with the question of the war. Our reply to the Russian circular would, therefore, not deal with the Balkan question. As, however, M. Cambon had enquired as to my view, I would tell him that I agreed entirely with what Sir Arthur Nicolson had already said to him. It would be a great mistake for France, Russia, and England to take separate action in Sofia and Constantinople without consulting Germany and Austria. To do so would set German and Austrian diplomacy in motion against us, and the result would be confusion and perhaps dangerous developments. Russia and Austria were the two Great Powers most directly interested in the Balkan question. If they could come to an agreement with regard to it, so much the better; but, if not, I thought it would be better to revert to the combined action of the five Powers, as had been done in the case of the Macedonian question some years ago. It would be very inconvenient if the Powers were divided into two opposing groups with regard to the Balkan question. If Russia fell out with Austria, we, and I supposed France also, would have to consider the lengths to which we would be prepared to go in support of Russia. At the time of the difficulty as to Bosnia and Herzegovina, I had told M. Iswolsky that we would on no account go to war about that. It would be very undesirable and inconvenient if the situation developed again into anything of that sort: but this it assuredly would do, if an attempt was made to take separate action in Sofia and Constantinople without consulting Austria and Germany in the first instance at all.

M. Cambon remarked that the truth of what I said was evident.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 352, No. 350]

No. 367.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 5282/4468/12/44.

(No. 65.) Confidential.

Sir,

Paris, D. February 4, 1912.

R. February 6, 1912.

With reference to your despatches to me Nos. 20 and 37 of the 9th⁽¹⁾ and 29th⁽²⁾ ultimo respectively I have the honour to acquaint you that I yesterday asked M. Poincaré whether he believed that the Russian Government were really seriously apprehensive of developments in the Near East likely to cause complications or that the representations which were being made on the subject by the Russian Government were inspired by M. Izvolsky at the instigation of M. Tittoni to whom as we knew had been due the abortive suggestions for a cessation of the Italo-Turkish war by an armistice, the withdrawal of the Turkish troops, the payment of an indemnity by Italy and the recognition by the Powers of her possession of Tripoli without any written admission of it by Turkey.

M. Poincaré said that at first he had thought that M. Izvolsky had been inspired with alarm by M. Tittoni, and that it had been passed on to Petersburg, but the persistence with which the Russian Government pressed the subject made him think that they must have some better reasons for the fears which they expressed; and certainly the general condition of things was very far from satisfactory. The Italian Government had embarked on their Tripoli enterprise without full consideration of its dangers. They were in an awkward predicament and they were seeking arguments by which to persuade the Powers to help them out of the difficulties, of their own creation, by pressure on the Porte. The French Government would not act with the Russian Government without the co-operation of His Majesty's Government, and they would not join in any pressure at Constantinople unless the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments were parties to it, and even then very great care would be required having regard to the large Mahommedan interests of France and England. It had been reported that the German Ambassador at Constantinople and M. de Kiderlen Waechter had held language to the effect that mediation would be impossible so long as the Italian Government adhered to the annexation decree as it stood. M. Poincaré hoped that as time went on the Italians would find some way out of the annexation decree pure and simple and realize the advantage of making terms which the Turks could accept.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

(¹) [Not reproduced. It reported a conversation with M. Paul Cambon on the question of mediation. (F O. 1534/4/12/44.)]

(²) [v. *supra*, pp. 363-4, No. 365.]

No. 368.

*Sir Rennell Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.*Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Sir Edward,

Rome, February 5, 1912.

A day or two ago a Senator, whom I see a good deal of, announced⁽²⁾ that the Triple Alliance had just been signed again, for a renewed term, and expressed his regrets, as he did not appreciate the association. He said it had been

(¹) [Grey MSS., Vol. 25.]

(²) [Three words at the beginning of the first paragraph and two lines at the end are omitted to avoid personal references.]

signed eight or ten days before, which would have been just about the date when Kiderlen-Wachter was here. The same Senator, just after the visit of the latter, meeting me in the street, had asked me whether I thought his advent meant the renewal of the alliance. I do not believe the least in my friend's information, nor does Barrère, to whom I mentioned his story. I imagine it to be just the sort of report which would spring up, as an immediate consequence of the visit of the German Foreign Minister. . . .

There is of course one line of argument which might have been used with some effect to the Italians. They might have been told that Aehrenthal's days are numbered, that he and the old Emperor are their only friends in Austria, and that if they wished to safeguard their future, they had best do so before it became, as there was danger of its doing, too late. Admitting that this argument might weigh with those in power here, especially now that they see that they are likely to be involved in Tripoli for a long time to come, I still do not believe it was used, or that the question was "of actuality" during Kiderlen's visit. On former occasions a public announcement has always followed the renewal. The question would not come up normally before next year and it seems particularly improbable that Italy should contemplate its being decided, so long before the due time, just at a moment when the near future is so full of uncertainties for her and she must inevitably wait on circumstance to see which way her greatest advantage is going to lie.

However it is not amiss that we should be reminded of the comparative nearness of the moment for decision, and consider in good time what our policy should be. I have up to now always understood that you and a series of your predecessors at the Foreign Office have, on the whole, regarded the participation of Italy in the Triple Alliance as rather desirable than not from the point of view of the peace of Europe. If France at one time took a somewhat different line, there was reason to believe that a year or two ago she had somewhat modified her former attitude and that her point of view had been affected by the secret understanding, according to which Italy's participation was discounted as far as France was concerned. Recent events, however, and the strategic position which Italy will eventually hold in the Mediterranean, if she succeeds in all her ambitions in the Tripoli venture, do seem very considerably to change the conditions under which her association in the Tripoli Alliance might be regarded by us rather with favour than otherwise, and there appears to be some prospect in the very near future of her interests and those of Austria becoming so antagonistic as to make the continuance of the alliance as an effective instrument problematical.

If it is difficult for Italy to make up her mind conclusively at the present moment, it is probably not less difficult for us to see clearly what is for the best, and I do not know that our views would affect the decision; but it is possible that, when the question is raised, Italy may feel impelled to put forward conditions, arising out of her new situation, before pledging her adherence for a further term of years: and it is not inconceivable that some opportunity might then present itself, for which it would be well to be not unprepared. It seems to me therefore that the time has almost come to give this matter consideration and that it would be well to have a definite line in view and also to know if possible what the future attitude of France is likely to be.

Very sincerely yours,
 RENNELL RODD.

No. 369.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*St. Petersburg, February 21, 1912.*

F.O. 7625/4/12/44.

D. 8.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 78.)

R. 10.30 P.M.

I handed to Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day memorandum enclosed in your despatch No. 43,⁽²⁾ with contents of which he had already been made acquainted by Russian Ambassador in London. I further explained to him your views with regard to suggested action at Sophia and Constantinople. His Excellency gave me explanations on the latter question, which I am reporting by messenger, from which it appears that what he said to the French Ambassador here has been incorrectly reported to you.

His Excellency then gave me an *aide-mémoire* with the request that I would telegraph its contents. It begins by stating that, in reply to a communication of the Russian Ambassador, you had explained views of His Majesty's Government in following sense:—

“When once the opportuneness of such an intervention had been unanimously established in principle by Powers, the latter should invite Turkey to entrust her cause to the five Powers, who, after having taken council together, and having consulted Italy confidentially, should elaborate conditions of a cessation of hostilities, and should advise the Porte to accept them.”

Aide-mémoire then proceeds:—

“In associating themselves entirely in this manner of proceeding, which, while tantamount to a mediation, would permit Powers to evade delicate question of decree of annexation, Imperial Government desires to avoid difficulties which might possibly arise should the Porte attach to its acceptance of mediation certain preliminary conditions of a nature to render abortive any further pacificatory action.

“The Imperial Government would therefore suggest that all the steps indicated above should be preceded by an exchange of views between the Powers and Italy, who should be invited to communicate to them the minimum of the conditions on which she would consent to accept an intervention of the Powers.

“Were the Powers to be made acquainted beforehand with these conditions, they would be able at the very commencement of the conversations to indicate at Constantinople certain advantages which might serve as compensation for eventual withdrawal of the Turkish troops from African provinces, such as raising of the blockade on the Arabian coast and return to *status quo ante bellum* as regards the Italian naval forces in the Red Sea—advantages which might induce the Porte to entrust its interests to the Powers.”⁽³⁾

Minister for Foreign Affairs is telegraphing above to Russian Ambassadors at various capitals as basis of their discussions with respective Governments. He begged me to do all I could to induce you to accept his proposals and to instruct His

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 51); to Rome (as No. 56); to Constantinople (as No. 65); to Berlin (as No. 9); to Vienna (as No. 9). Copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It enclosed a memorandum of February 12, which had been communicated to Count Benckendorff in reply to a Russian communication of January 30, relating to possible action by the Great Powers to secure cessation of hostilities between Italy and Turkey. The important part of the British memorandum is given above. (F.O. 5365/4/12/44.)]

⁽³⁾ [The whole of the *Aide-mémoire* was sent as an enclosure in Sir G. Buchanan's despatch No. 57 of February 21, R. February 26, 1912. (F.O. 8234/4/12/44.)]

Majesty's Ambassadors accordingly. He is so convinced of the advisability of our first sounding Italy before taking any action at Constantinople and is so very anxious to get his proposals accepted that I trust that you may be able to meet his wishes.

[*ED. NOTE.*—Sir G. Lowther, in his Despatch No 153 of February 19, 1912, R. February 26, reported a conversation with Assim Bey. The latter had said that instructions had been sent to Ottoman representatives abroad to inform the Governments that, if Italy did not confine military operations to the seat of war, the Porte had decided to close the Dardanelles and make all Italians at Constantinople prisoners of war. (F.O. 8188/6489/12/44.) In reply to a telegram of enquiry from Sir Edward Grey dated February 28, 1912, Sir G. Lowther telegraphed on the next day (No. 40 of February 29, 1912) that he did not think that the Porte had taken a definite decision (F.O. 8995/8565/12/44). Meanwhile the telegram containing a proposal for action by the Powers had already been sent (*v.* immediately succeeding document).]

No. 370.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 8842/8565/12/41.

Tel (No. 78.)

Foreign Office, February 28, 1912.

In view of the very serious injury which would be caused to commerce should the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t in self-defence proceed to close the Dardanelles by mines, I would like to know if the Gov[ernmen]t to which you are accredited would consider it desirable to approach Italy and ask her if she would be disposed to give an assurance that she would undertake no hostile operations in the Dardanelles and neighbouring waters.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Rome (No. 82); to Constantinople (No. 89); to Vienna (No. 22); to Berlin (No. 25); to St. Petersburg (No. 169).]

⁽²⁾ [A minute by Sir A. Nicolson records that he drafted this telegram after a conversation with M. Paul Cambon. The latter had heard through the French Ambassador in Vienna that the Italian Government had renewed their assurances that they would not undertake hostile operations in the Adriatic or Ægean Seas; this would preclude hostile action in the vicinity of the Dardanelles and Smyrna, though Beyrout was outside the Ægean Sea.]

No. 371.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

Rome, February 29, 1912.

F.O. 8992/4/12/44.

D. 2.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 29.) Urgent. Secret.

R. 4.25 P.M.

Russian Mediation Proposals.

In reply to enquiries from the Russian Ambassador the Austrian Ambassador stated on the evening of Feb[ruary] 27 he had no instructions to act with the other Powers in exchanging views with Italy before approaching Constantinople but would inform Russian Ambassador as soon as they arrived. On the morning of Feb[ruary] 28th German Ambassador gave similar reply. At 1.0. P.M. however, the latter telegraphed that he had received them but could do nothing until all his colleagues were similarly instructed. Austria has hitherto made no further communication. We have however learnt very confidentially that both Austrian and German Ambassadors went to M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] yesterday and announced steps about to be taken. Motive appears to be evident. Russian secretary after seeing me and French Ambassador had told the German and Austrian Ambassadors that he gathered

that we should be instructed to support proposal of Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] and other two apparently wished to steal a march.

Position now is that Italian Government are aware of the agreement to exchange views, as far as Russia, Austria and Germany are concerned, while French Ambassador and myself have as yet no instructions. French Ambassador also informs me that he has learnt from Paris that you hesitate to agree to sound Italy without simultaneously approaching Constantinople, that therefore French Government hesitate also. He has telegraphed urging that he may receive immediate instructions to act with his colleagues in the sense of Russian proposal. I submit that in view of what has occurred I should also be similarly instructed.

What appears to be a semi-official communication foreshadowing mediation was published in late edition of Tribuna last night no doubt after the communication made by the Austrian and German Ambassadors and Wolff telegram from Berlin. published this morning states that Russian proposal has been accepted by Austro-Hungarian and German Governments and that German Ambassador at Rome has already since several days been directed to join representatives of the other Powers when similarly instructed but that (?) a divergent proposal emanating from England has necessitated new negotiations.

MINUTES.

We ought to make 1. Our attitude perfectly clear at once both at Rome and Constantinople, lodge a complaint at Berlin and Vienna and if necessary issue an official statement.

We cannot trust the 2 Powers not to misrepresent us and I sincerely hope that our circular telegrams respecting the Dardanelles coming on top of this may not lead to further misrepresentation.

2. I would suggest that we should steal a march this time and instruct Sir R. Rodd to tell the Italian G[overnment] the exact scope of the Dardanelles instruction before they hear of it from Berlin.

L. M.

I will speak to the Sec[retary] of State.

A. N.

Draw up a telegram to Sir G. Lowther making our attitude clear and one to Sir R. Rodd⁽¹⁾ and instruct the latter also about Dardanelles.⁽²⁾

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [The telegram to Sir R. Rodd (No. 92) was repeated to Constantinople (No. 102), on March 1. *v. infra*, p. 371, No. 373.]

⁽²⁾ [Sir Edward Grey's telegram No. 93 to Sir R. Rodd of March 1, D. 2.10 p.m., authorised him, if he thought it desirable, to "explain confidentially to M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] the substance and scope of our proposal regarding Dardanelles" (F.O. 9001/8565/12/44.)]

No. 372.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 9009/4/12/44.

(No. 108.) Confidential.

Sir,

Paris, D. February 29, 1912.

R. March 1, 1912.

I have the honour to acquaint you that the Minister for Foreign Affairs, whom I saw this morning, informs me that the communiqué, the terms of which I reported in my despatch No. 106 of yesterday's date,⁽¹⁾ was issued to the Press by the French Government in consequence of an article which had appeared in the "Matin" of the previous day, and which had obviously been inspired by the Italian Ambassador at Paris, to the effect that the Powers of the "Triple Entente" were disposed, if the

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 8864/4/12/44.)]

German and Austro-Hungarian Governments joined therein, to exercise pressure on the Porte to obtain the withdrawal of the Ottoman troops from Tripoli and a cessation of hostilities between Italy and Turkey. M. Poincaré tells me that the Russian Ambassador stated to him yesterday that M. Tittoni was very much perturbed (très ému) at the démenti of the French Government to which the Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that he could well understand his being so, but that the démenti in question was necessary as the "Matin" article of which I enclose a copy⁽²⁾ and which M. Poincaré knew to have been the result of an interview granted to its Editor by the Italian Ambassador did not state the facts correctly and was calculated to place the French Government in an invidious position vis-à-vis to the Turkish Government.

Monsieur Poincaré further stated to the Russian Ambassador, so he informed me, that he regretted and was surprised that the Russian Government should have thought fit to make proposals to the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments for bringing about the cessation of hostilities between Italy and Turkey without previous consultation and agreement with the French and British Governments. The result was an appearance of dissidence between Russia, France and England in the particular question at issue. M. Isvolsky assured M. Poincaré that it was far from the intention of the Russian Government to fail in their obligations to the French Government in this or in other matters. M. Poincaré is not at all satisfied with M. Isvolsky's general assurances. He considers that the precipitate action of the Russian Government which he attributes to the Ambassador's inspiration at the instigation of his Italian colleague, is calculated to prejudice the interests of France and England for the Porte would most assuredly reject the terms which the Italian Government are known to require at present and such a situation if the French and British Governments were in any way associated in communicating them to the Turkish Government would be resented by the Mussulman populations of French and British possessions. M. Poincaré's intention in suggesting simultaneous enquiries at Rome and Constantinople was that the Powers when acquainted with the views of the Italian and Turkish Governments might judge as to the expediency of their mediation between the combatants at the present moment. He does not consider it at all likely that the Porte would consent to withdraw the Turkish troops from Tripoli on the terms mentioned in the telegram of yesterday from His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg⁽³⁾ and thus desert the Arab subjects of the Sultan in their defence of his Empire.

As to a suggestion that had been made, that the Italian Government might be willing to recognise the authority of the Sultan in religious matters M. Poincaré observed that the Italian Government would have no more power for or against the religious authority of the Sultan in Tripoli than the French Government have in regard to the authority of the Pope over the Roman Catholics in France.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

MINUTE.

M. Poincaré's answer was much to the point.

L. M.
E. G.

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. Marginal note: "Le Matin, Feb[ruary] 27, 1912."]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced. It is telegram No. 81, of February 27, 1912, D. 9.10 P.M., R. 10 P.M., (F O. 8646/4/12/44.) The conditions suggested were "such as promise of withdrawal of Italian ships from the Red Sea, etc."]

No. 373.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 8992/4/12/44.

Tel. (No. 92.)

*Foreign Office, March 1, 1912, 1.55 P.M.*Your tel[egram] No. 29.⁽²⁾

No instructions have been sent to you to take any steps at Rome as I am waiting to hear whether the Russian Gov[ernmen]t will adhere to the proposal of the French M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] to make a simultaneous enquiry at Constantinople as to views of Turkish Gov[ernmen]t. I am willing to adhere to the proposal of the French M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] if all the Powers also accede. The object of an enquiry at Const[antino]ple simultaneous with that at Rome is to elucidate the views of both bel[l]igerents so that the Powers may see if there is any possibility of reconciling them. As the statement published by the Wolff bureau is inaccurate and misleading, I am proposing to the French Gov[ernmen]t that the Turkish Ambass[adors] at London and at Paris should be verbally informed that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t proposed that an enquiry should be addressed at Rome in the first instance as to the terms on which Italy would be prepared to terminate hostilities, but that the French Gov[ernmen]t and ourselves consider that it would be advisable to endeavour to procure the assent of all the Powers to a similar enquiry being simultaneously made at Const[antino]ple so that the Powers could judge whether there was a possibility of reconciling the views of the two belligerents, and thereby facilitating a mediation.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Berlin (No. 30); to Vienna (No. 26); to St Petersburg (No. 182); to Constantinople (No. 102); to Paris (No. 85). An additional telegram was sent to Paris (No. 86) on March 1, at 3.15 P.M., instructing Sir F. Bertie to ascertain whether M Poincaré agreed. The telegrams to the other capitals were for information only.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 368-9, No. 371.]

No. 374.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 9665/4/12/44.

Tel. (No. 201.)

*Foreign Office, March 4, 1912, 11 P.M.*Your telegram No. 88.⁽²⁾

In view of meeting the desire of Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, instructions have been sent to Sir R. Rodd⁽³⁾ to associate himself with the other representatives in the sense of the Russian prop[osal]. We understand that French Government will not maintain their proposal for a simultaneous enquiry at Constantinople.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Paris by post (No. 111); to Constantinople (No. 113); to Rome (No. 106).]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It reported Russian objection to French supplementary proposals. (F.O. 9277/4/12/44.)]

⁽³⁾ [v. immediately succeeding document.]

No. 375.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 9665/4/12/44.

Tel. (No. 105.)

Foreign Office, March 4, 1912, 11 P.M.

As soon as your French colleague has received his instructions you could associate yourself with your other colleagues in acting in accordance with the proposal of the Russian Government as to the enquiries to be made of the Italian Gov[ernmen]t.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated by post to Paris (No. 111); to Constantinople (No. 112).]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 9798/8565/12/44.

(No. 53.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 4, 1912.

The Italian Ambassador observed to-day that there was no truth in the rumours which there had lately been as to movements of the Italian Fleet. His Government had no desire to extend their operations, but at the same time they must reserve their freedom of action, and could not give any pledge.

I said that the possibility of the Dardanelles being closed to neutral commerce caused me anxiety. In such an event, there would be very strong feeling here, as British shipping was very much interested.

The Ambassador repeated with emphasis that his Government had no desire to take any such step, or to attack the forts of the Dardanelles⁽²⁾: an attack which it would be very risky for a Fleet to make. But it would be a fatal mistake for his Government to give any pledge, especially at this moment, when mediation was in the air. If the Turks were assured against all risk, they would never give in, and no effort at mediation could be successful.

As he continued to emphasise the impossibility of his Government giving any pledge, and the necessity that they should reserve their freedom of action, I said that my attitude must be a corresponding one. I must reserve freedom of action if neutral commerce was stopped in the Dardanelles.

The Ambassador did not take exception to anything which I had said, but he implored me not to say anything to the Turks, but to leave them under apprehension. He knew that other Powers had said that Italy would be within her rights; and the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs had said definitely to the Turkish Ambassador in St. Petersburg that, if Turkey would not come to terms, exception could not be taken to action by Italy against the Dardanelles.

I said that, of course, if the Italian Government would not give any pledge, I could not tell the Turkish Government that any pledge had been given. But I must say something to the Turkish Government if they proposed to lay down mines and block the Dardanelles. I should have to consider what to say in such an event.

The Ambassador attached great importance to preserving the pressure of apprehension in Constantinople while mediation was in prospect. Italy must be firm on the point of suzerainty. She could not concede anything on that point. But she would not require the Turks to give a direct recognition to the annexation. She would be liberal with money compensation, and she would recognise the religious aspect of the Khalifate. Once the Turks had withdrawn their troops from Tripoli, it would be easier for Italy to give an assurance as to the limits of her own action.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [A telegram (No. 107) was sent to Sir R. Rodd at 11 P.M. on March 4. (F.O. 9286/8565/12/44.) It described Sir Edward Grey's interview with the Italian Ambassador in less detail, and added "You can explain to the Italian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that I had thought of asking his views respecting Dardanelles, but that what Italian Ambassador has now told me renders this unnecessary." The telegram was repeated to Constantinople (No. 114); to Paris (No. 100), to St Petersburg (No. 202); to Berlin (No. 33); to Vienna (No. 29).]

⁽²⁾ [Similar assurances were given by the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs to Sir R. Rodd on March 5, *cp.* Sir R. Rodd's telegram No. 35 to Sir Edward Grey, of March 5, Received March 6 (F.O. 9770/8565/12/44).]

[*ED. NOTE* —At the time of the interview recorded in the immediately preceding document, replies to Sir Edward Grey's proposal as to the Dardanelles of February 28, 1912 (*v. supra*, p. 368, No. 370), had not been received from either France or Germany. Sir G. Buchanan had sent the Russian reply, which was unfavourable, in his telegram No. 89 of March 2, 1912, R. March 3.

(F.O. 9278/8565/12/44) The Austro-Hungarian reply was also unfavourable, although not so definite, and was received on the same day (telegram No. 24 of March 2. F.O. 9290/8565/12/44). The German reply came on March 4 in Sir E. Goschen's telegram No. 26 of March 4, 1912 (F.O. 9578/8565/12/44), and the French on March 7 as an enclosure to Sir F. Bertie's despatch No. 117 of March 5, 1912 (F.O. 9887/8565/12/44). The German decision was against the proposal, and the French in favour of it.]

No. 377.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 10420/8565/12/44.

(No. 74.)

St. Petersburg, D. March 5, 1912.

Sir,

R. March 11, 1912.

On the receipt of your telegram No. 169 of the 28th of last month⁽²⁾ I wrote privately to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, saying that you would be glad to learn whether His Excellency would consider it advisable to approach the Italian Government with a view to obtaining from them an assurance that they would undertake no hostile operations in the Dardanelles and neighbouring waters.

Monsieur Sazonow, whom I met at a dinner on the following evening, told me that he had been giving the matter his careful consideration, but that he feared that his answer must be a negative one. He hardly thought that the Powers would be justified, as neutrals, in presenting such a request to Italy: while it might be regarded by her as an attempt to restrict the field of her operations. He was most anxious to avoid taking any step to which the Italian Government could possibly take exception, as he wished to keep on the friendliest terms with them. Italy, His Excellency added, was a valuable counterpoise to Austria in the Balkans and ever since the Racconigi meeting⁽³⁾ the two Governments had kept in close touch with each other as regarded their policy in that peninsula.

On my reminding His Excellency of the benefit which such an engagement as you had suggested on the part of Italy would confer on neutral commerce, Monsieur Sazonow replied that he fully admitted this. It was, however, one of the unfortunate consequences of any war that the commerce of neutral nations invariably suffered loss: and, while sympathising with the object which you had in view, he could not join in the step which you had proposed.

Monsieur Sazonow then turned the conversation to the subject of his own mediation proposals.

I had informed him on the 24th of last month that you had no objection in principle to the course sketched in the *aide-mémoire* which accompanied my despatch No. 57 of the 21st February,⁽⁴⁾ and that His Majesty's Government were ready to join in exchanging views with the Italian Government before approaching the Porte on the subject, provided that the consent of all the other Powers had been previously secured. When a few days later I had asked him what he thought of Monsieur Poincaré's suggestion that the Powers should make simultaneous enquiries at Rome and Constantinople, His Excellency had at once declared that he saw no possible advantage in it and had maintained that by first going to Rome the Powers would be in a position to hold out to Turkey the prospect of receiving some substantial compensation in return for the withdrawal of her troops from Tripoli. It might thus be possible, he thought, to bring about a cessation of hostilities, without touching on the delicate question of the recognition of the annexation.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 368, No. 370, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

⁽³⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 79, No. 70, note ⁽¹⁾.]

⁽⁴⁾ [Not reproduced (F.O. 8234/4/12/44), as a summary of the despatch is given in Sir G. Buchanan's telegram No. 73. *v. supra*, pp. 367-8, No. 369.]

Monsieur Sazonow now told me that he had heard that the French Government were pressing their own proposal on the acceptance of His Majesty's Government; and His Excellency expressed his earnest hope that you would not go back on what you had instructed me to tell him in your telegram No. 140 of the 22nd February.⁽⁵⁾ Monsieur Sazonow spoke with considerable irritation of Monsieur Poincaré's attitude, which he attributed mainly to "*pique*" at having received the Russian proposals two days after they had been communicated to the other Powers, owing to Monsieur Iswolsky having, for some unaccountable reason, waited for Monsieur Poincaré's weekly diplomatic reception instead of delivering them at once.

After the receipt on the following day of your telegram No. 181 of the 1st March,⁽⁶⁾ I called on Monsieur Sazonow and informed him that you agreed with Monsieur Poincaré in thinking that it would be preferable to make enquiries simultaneously at Rome and Constantinople, and that you trusted that His Excellency would also concur in this view if all the other Powers agreed.

Monsieur Sazonow, who did not conceal his disappointment, remarked somewhat sharply that he wished that Monsieur Poincaré or somebody else would explain to him why the French proposal was preferable to his. He declined to listen to the explanations which I endeavoured to give—to the effect that it would remove any possible misconception as to the desire of the Powers to act impartially between the belligerents, and declared that the result of the repeated changes that were being introduced into his original proposals would be that the Turks would see that Europe was divided and acting in a half-hearted manner, and that they would consequently pay no attention to anything that the Powers might say. What, however, distressed him most was the fact that if the French proposal were persisted in, all the world would know that even on a matter of secondary importance like the one under discussion, the triple *entente* was divided in itself, and that Russia was receiving more support from Germany and Austria than from her friend and her ally. I would, His Excellency added, have noticed the telegram from Berlin published in the morning papers, in which emphasis was laid on the fact that Germany had been the first to announce her acceptance of the Russian proposal.

He was, His Excellency informed me, leaving St. Petersburg that evening for a couple of days, and would speak to me again on his return.

In view of the importance which Monsieur Sazonow evidently attaches to the acceptance of his own proposal and of the unfavourable contrast that is sure to be drawn by the Russian press between the attitude of the triple *entente* and that of the Triple Alliance should that proposal be rejected by France and England, I ventured in my telegram No. 88 of the 22nd instant [*sic*: ultimo]⁽⁷⁾ to submit whether it might not be advisable for the two Governments to reconsider the question.

On my calling on Monsieur Sazonow this afternoon to communicate to him the substance of your telegram No. 201 of yesterday,⁽⁸⁾ His Excellency expressed great satisfaction at hearing that His Majesty's Ambassador at Rome had been instructed to associate himself with the Representatives of the other Powers in the sense of the Russian proposal. His Excellency told me that he gathered from a telegram, which he had received from Monsieur Iswolsky yesterday that the French Government had dropped their own proposal; while he had given the Austrian Ambassador the explanations asked for by his Government and was now awaiting their definite acceptance.

It is interesting to note how anxious Monsieur Sazonow is to avoid doing anything that might give umbrage to Italy: and his evident desire to use her as a counter-

(5) [Not reproduced. It authorized Sir G. Buchanan to inform Monsieur Sazonow that His Majesty's Government were ready to join with all the other Powers in exchanging views with Italy before approaching Constantinople. (F.O. 7625/4/12/44.)]

(6) [Not reproduced. It expressed the agreement of His Majesty's Government with the French proposal. (F.O. 8356/4/12/44.)]

(7) [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 9277/4/12/44.)]

(8) [*v. supra*, p. 371, No. 374.]

poise to Austria in the Balkans shows that the suspicions with which he regards the policy of the latter Power have not been dissipated by the friendly assurances which, as he recently told me, Monsieur de Giers had brought him from Count Berchtold, to the effect that Austria would take no step in the Balkans that could in any way "froisser les susceptibilités de la Russie."

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

No. 378.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

Rome, March 8, 1912.

F.O. 10210/4/12/44.

D. 11.35 A.M.

Tel. (No. 37.)

R. 3.45 P.M.

My immediately preceding telegram of 6th March: Mediation.⁽²⁾

Austrian Ambassador stated last night that, after declining to attend Ambassadors' meeting on March 5th on the ground that he had not sufficient instructions he received a telegram informing him that on the same day British Embassy at Vienna had informed the Austrian Government that you had accepted French counter-proposal; he therefore congratulated himself on his discretion.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent in print to Vienna. Copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence, to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It referred to the invitations issued by the Russian Ambassador for an Ambassadorial meeting at the French embassy, and to the absence of the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador. (F.O. 9876/8565/12/44.)]

No. 379.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 10647/1330/12/44.

Tel. (No. 120.)

Foreign Office, March 8, 1912.

My despatch No. 81 of February 29: Reorganisation of Turkish navy.⁽¹⁾

H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] have carefully considered the request of the Ottoman Government for the loan of Admiral Gamble's services. They much regret that he is not available, as he cannot be spared from the command of the 6th cruiser squadron, to which he was only recently appointed. The First Lord of the Admiralty has given his serious attention to the question of the selection of a substitute and has satisfied himself that no one more suitable could be found than Rear-Admiral Arthur H. Limpus, C.B. who is personally known to him as one of the best and most rising rear-admirals in the service, and who will devote the whole of his talents to raising to the highest point possible the efficiency of the Turkish fleet.

First Lord points out that he is making a very great sacrifice in sparing the officer at this moment.

You should so inform Turkish Gov[ernment] at once.⁽²⁾

Despatch follows.⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ [An admiral was to be appointed in succession to Rear-Admiral Williams. *v. supra*, p. 282, *Ed. note.*]

⁽²⁾ [Sir G. Lowther's telegram No. 67 to Sir Edward Grey of March 19, 1912, stated that "Turkish Government agree with gratitude to selection." (F.O. 11908/1330/12/44.)]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced, as the tenour is sufficiently indicated above.]

No. 380.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*St. Petersburg, March 9, 1912.*

F.O. 10875/4/12/44.

D. 8.45 P.M.

Tel. (No. 99.)

R. 9.15 P.M.

My telegram No. 95.⁽²⁾

Minister for Foreign Affairs informs me that Austria has now definitely accepted his mediation proposal.

On my enquiring whether he proposed taking any further steps to give effect to it he replied that he thought manner of approaching Italian Government should be left to the Ambassadors. I asked whether Russian Ambassador would take initiative in convoking a meeting of his colleagues. Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that his Excellency was so old that it might be better to leave this to a younger man, and suggested dozen of five Ambassadors.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It merely reported M. Sazonov's thanks for the instructions sent to Sir R. Rodd (*v. supra*, p. 371. Nos. 374-5) and stated that he was still awaiting a definite reply from Austria-Hungary. (F.O. 9695/4/12/44.)]

No. 381.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 11734/4/12/44.

(No. 70.) Confidential.

Rome, D. March 10, 1912.

Sir,

R. March 19, 1912.

As I have had the honour to report to you by telegraph,⁽¹⁾ the communication proposed by the Russian Government, as reported in Sir G. Buchanan's telegram No. 73 of the 21st of February,⁽²⁾ was yesterday made to the Italian Government, first by the Russian Ambassador and then by the Ambassadors of Austria-Hungary, France, Germany and Great Britain.

It may be of interest to recapitulate the antecedents of this international action as experienced at Rome.

In the first place, as regards the incident reported in my telegram No. 29, Secret, of the 29th of February,⁽³⁾ there appears to be no doubt that the German and Austrian Ambassadors did on the 28th let the Italian Foreign Office know that their respective Governments had accepted the Russian proposal to sound the Italian Government, and the same evening a communication was made by the Italian Foreign Office to the press foreshadowing mediation. I do not however think that the Austrian Ambassador stated that he had received any instructions, and it was not until the 8th instant that he so informed the Russian Embassy. The German Ambassador received his instructions on the 28th of February and the following morning a telegram from the Wolff Bureau at Berlin published here announced that the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments had accepted the Russian proposal, and that the German Ambassador had several days before been instructed to associate himself with the representatives of the other Powers when they had received similar instructions. It was added that new negotiations had been necessitated by a different proposal emanating from Great Britain. This was untrue, and it seemed evident that there was here an attempt to make capital for the Triple Alliance by a public announcement of the readiness of her allies to approach Italy first. The German Ambassador explained to the Russian Embassy the apparent discrepancy between the V_h of

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced, as the tenour is sufficiently indicated. (F.O. 10378/4/12/44.)]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 367-8, No. 369.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 368-9, No. 371.]

telegram and his own announcement regarding his instructions, by saying that they had been forwarded to him by post and had lost time on the road.

At that period neither I nor the French Ambassador had received instructions to associate ourselves with the proposed Russian initiative, and we were both informed that the French Government had suggested to Monsieur Sazonow that it would be preferable to sound the views of the Italian and Turkish Governments simultaneously.

On the 4th instant I received your instructions⁽⁴⁾ to associate myself with my colleagues in supporting the Russian proposal as soon as the French Ambassador had been similarly instructed, and I accordingly informed the Russian Embassy. On the 6th Monsieur Barrère having also received instructions the five Ambassadors were invited to meet at the French Embassy, at the seat of the doyen, to discuss the mode of procedure. My Russian colleague had assumed from the Wolff telegram that the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador had been duly instructed, but to our surprise he expressed himself as unable to attend the meeting having no definite instructions. I met him in the course of the afternoon and he explained to me that, although his Government had accepted the Russian proposal in principle, there had subsequently been a different French proposal as to the fate of which he had no information. The same evening, at a dinner at the German Embassy he informed Mr. Dering that while he had been talking to me in the afternoon a telegram had arrived from Vienna informing him that the British Embassy had on the previous day, the 6th of March, told Count Berchtold that His Majesty's Government had agreed to support the French proposal, he therefore congratulated himself in not having acted with precipitancy and in having refrained from attending the meeting at the French Embassy.

On the morning of the 8th, however, he received definite instructions to associate himself with his colleagues in making a communication to the Italian Government in the sense of the Russian proposal and, that afternoon, the five Ambassadors all assembled, once more at the French Embassy.

Each of us was provided with the text of Monsieur Sazonow's aide-mémoire,⁽⁵⁾ their copies being in French and mine in English. The Austrian Ambassador raised a question as to the use of the word intervention in the phrase "the minimum of the conditions on which she (Italy) would consent to accept an intervention of the Powers." He contended that "intervention" had a well-defined diplomatic meaning, implying, in fact, a stronger action than mediation, and questioned how far the suggestion of "intervention" did not go beyond the spirit of the rest of the aide-mémoire, presuming that it should therefore be read in the sense of mediation. With this interpretation we all agreed, seeing that the previous paragraph described the manner of proceeding proposed as tantamount to a mediation.

It was therefore agreed that, while employing the words used in the text, we should explain, if occasion arose that intervention was used not in the formal diplomatic sense, but rather as a synonym for mediation, and that we should inform the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, individually but on the same day, that we were instructed to invite Italy to communicate to the Powers the minimum of the conditions on which she would consent to accept their intervention with a view to bringing about a cessation of hostilities. It was further agreed that Russia, having initiated the proposal, should pay His Excellency the first visit.

We were accordingly all received by the Marquis di San Giuliano yesterday. The communication appeared to afford him considerable satisfaction, and he said he would take two or three days to reflect upon the answer which he would have to return in the name of the Italian Government. Whatever that answer might be, he said he would wish it not to be regarded as necessarily a final one. Italy might make suggestions which would fail to be acceptable for various reasons to the mentality of the Ottoman Government; on the other hand, the Turks might require certain

⁽⁴⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 371, No. 375.]

⁽⁵⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 367-8, No. 369, and note ⁽³⁾.]

conditions which Italy had not thought of offering but which she might find it advantageous to take into consideration. In short he was anxious that we should understand that Italy would not wish to close the door to future negotiations, and he expressed his gratitude to the Powers for the step they had taken.

The "Tribuna," issued this evening, contains an official communication of which the following is a translation:—

"Yesterday the Ambassadors of France, Great Britain, Germany and Austria-Hungary, and just before them the Councillor of the Russian Embassy—the Ambassador being ill—proceeded separately to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and each of them enquired of the Minister on what conditions Italy would be disposed to accept the friendly mediation of the Powers with a view to bringing about a cessation of hostilities. The Minister reserved his answer."

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

[*ED. NOTE.*—Telegrams from Sir G. Lowther dated March 10 communicated information from the Vice-Consul at Dardanelles that the Turkish authorities were laying mines on that day, a channel marked by buoys being left. (Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey telegrams No. 54 and 55, F.O. 10371-2/8565/12/44.) On March 5 Sir Edward Grey had informed Tewfik Pasha that in his opinion the "proper course for Turkey would be to have her mines ready, but not to place them unless an attack was imminent." (F.O. 10053/8565/12/44.)]

No. 382.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 11737/4/12/44.

(No. 74.) Confidential.

Sir,

Rome, D. March 15, 1912.

R. March 19, 1912.

With reference to my despatch No. 70 Confidential of the 10th instant⁽²⁾ I have the honour to report that the Minister for Foreign Affairs invited the Ambassadors of the five Powers to the Foreign Office this afternoon to receive the reply of the Italian Government to the communication which we had been instructed to make to him on the 9th instant. This reply was handed to us in writing. The contents, with the exception of the preamble and the conclusion and one or two more amplifying passages, have been telegraphed to you this evening.⁽³⁾ His Excellency said that he did not propose to discuss the terms of the reply until we had had time to study it. He however drew particular attention to the avowal of the Italian Government of their readiness to consider in a spirit of conciliation any other proposals which the Powers might have to submit.

I have the honour to forward herewith the full text of the Italian reply.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

Enclosure in No. 382.

Reply of Italian Government to Communication of Ambassadors of Five Powers.

Les Gouvernements de l'Allemagne, de l'Autriche-Hongrie, de la France, de la Grande-Bretagne et de la Russie ont exprimé le désir de connaître le minimum des conditions auxquelles l'Italie subordonnerait l'acceptation d'une médiation des Puissances à l'effet de la cessation des hostilités entre l'Italie et la Turquie.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch and enclosure was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

⁽³⁾ [The telegram is not reproduced, as the reply of the Italian Government is given in full in the despatch above.]

Le Gouvernement Royal apprécie à sa juste valeur l'esprit amical qui a inspiré cette démarche des Grandes Puissances et le but hautement humanitaire qu'elles se proposent. Obéissant aux devoirs qui lui étaient imposés par sa dignité de Grande Puissance et par la nécessité de sauvegarder ses intérêts politiques et économiques dans la Méditerranée, l'Italie s'est vue contrainte à déclarer la guerre à la Turquie ; guerre que l'attitude du Gouvernement Ottoman avait rendue inévitable et qui a été constamment appuyée par le consentement unanime du Parlement et du pays. L'Italie n'a cependant pas d'intérêt à amoindrir la situation internationale de l'Empire Ottoman. Par conséquent, tout en poursuivant la guerre avec tous les moyens à sa disposition, l'Italie est également disposée, la réalisation de ses fins une fois assurée, à mettre un terme à l'état de guerre et à seconder, avec esprit de conciliation les efforts des Puissances tendant au rétablissement de la paix.

La cessation des hostilités signifie en effet la constitution d'un état de fait, équivalent à la paix, sans l'existence d'un traité qui en contienne la stipulation formelle.

La cessation des hostilités doit avant tout avoir comme base la souveraineté pleine et entière de l'Italie sur la Tripolitaine et la Cyrénaïque, telle qu'elle a été solennellement proclamée par la loi du Royaume du 27 février 1912.⁽⁴⁾ La reconnaissance de cette souveraineté, une fois explicitement admise par les Puissances, ne serait pas demandée à la Turquie. Il suffirait d'obtenir la certitude de sa renonciation pratique qui serait donnée en premier lieu par la retraite définitive de tous ses officiers et de toutes ses troupes des deux provinces. La Turquie devrait pareillement rétablir le "statu quo ante bellum" pour tout ce qui concerne la situation des sujets italiens dans son territoire (régime des capitulations, relations commerciales, bureaux de poste, écoles, hôpitaux, etc., etc.). L'Italie supprimerait, en échange, bien entendu, les surtaxes établies à l'entrée des produits turcs dans le Royaume.

Les concessions que l'Italie ferait de son côté pourraient se rapporter aux points suivants :—

1. reconnaissance de l'autorité religieuse du Calife, sous une forme analogue aux dispositions de l'article IV du protocole austro-turc du 26 février 1909, pour autant qu'elles seraient applicables aux usages et aux conditions locales, et à la condition qu'elles se maintiennent sur le terrain religieux, de manière à exclure tout ce qui pourrait constituer une immixtion politique ou y donner prétexte. Il ne faut pas laisser subsister, en effet, une source de conflits perpétuels, ce qui serait certes pas dans l'intérêt de l'Italie, ni des Puissances, ni de la Turquie elle-même.
2. Engagements relatifs à l'élévation des droits de douane, à l'établissement de monopoles, aux bureaux de poste italiens et au régime des capitulations dans l'Empire Ottoman, pareillement sous une forme analogue aux dispositions des articles VI, VII et VIII du protocole austro-turc sus-mentionné.
3. Remboursement, dans un montant à établir, de la valeur des biens immeubles de diverse nature, que l'État Ottoman possédait en Tripolitaine et en Cyrénaïque.
4. Confirmation de la déclaration déjà émise par le Gouvernement italien relativement à la garantie des intérêts représentés par le Conseil de la Dette Publique Ottomane, en ce qu'ils se rapportent aux revenus de la Tripolitaine et de la Cyrénaïque.
5. règlement des réclamations privées des sujets italiens en Turquie, en les déférant au Tribunal de La Haye, ou en adoptant telle autre solution qui serait proposée par les Puissances : règlement sur ces mêmes bases, ou solution proposée par les Puissances, de toutes les réclamations concernant les dommages infligés par la Turquie aux ressortissants italiens, à leur commerce et aux institutions italiennes pendant la guerre. Le droit des

(4) [sic : February 25.]

particuliers de faire valoir leurs raisons envers le Gouvernement Ottoman par la voie judiciaire devrait cependant demeurer intact.

6. déclaration de renoncer à l'application de toute punition aux populations arabes de la Tripolitaine et de la Cyrénaïque pour tous les faits survenus jusqu'à la date de la cessation des hostilités entre l'Italie et la Turquie : expression de la part du Gouvernement Royal de son intention d'appliquer aux dites populations un régime largement libéral, faisant droit aux us et coutumes de leur race ;
7. Accords à prendre avec les autres Grandes Puissances en vue d'une déclaration ou stipulation répondant au principe du maintien de l'intégrité territoriale de la Turquie d'Europe.

Le Gouvernement Royal, dans ses échanges de vue avec les Puissances, a déjà eu maintes fois l'occasion de mentionner quelques-unes des conditions sus-énoncées, en ayant soin d'ajouter qu'elles répondaient à la situation du moment, et qu'elles auraient dû subir des limitations considérables par suite de la prolongation de l'état de guerre. Cependant, et pour déférer au désir exprimé par les Grandes Puissances, le Gouvernement Royal est toujours disposé à maintenir ces conditions. Le Gouvernement Royal est convaincu que les Grandes Puissances reconnaîtront l'esprit de conciliation auquel s'inspirent les conditions qu'il propose. Si toutefois, dans le but de donner satisfaction aux intérêts et aux sentiments de la Turquie les Grandes Puissances présentaient quelques autres propositions le Gouvernement Royal est disposé à les examiner avec le même esprit de conciliation, en restant naturellement hors de discussion le point relatif à la souveraineté pleine et entière de l'Italie sur la Tripolitaine et la Cyrénaïque.

Les dispositions du Gouvernement Royal deviendraient naturellement moins favorables à la Turquie si la guerre devait se prolonger.

No. 388.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 11925/11263/12/44.

(No. 220.) Confidential.

Sir,

Pera, D. March 15, 1912.

R. March 20, 1912.

The news of the recall of Monsieur Tcharykow, the Russian Ambassador here, has given rise to some speculation in Constantinople and curiosity is rife as to the reasons which have induced the Czar to remove him from his post at this moment. The impression in well informed circles is that the cause may be found in the over friendly policy which Monsieur Tcharykow has, without corresponding success, adopted towards the Turks, in his marked leanings towards the Committee of Union and Progress, and in the absence of enthusiasm in favour of the peace proposals of Monsieur Sazonow, which he, in common with all other politicians here, is credited with having regarded as unpractical in present circumstances. There may further be some grain of truth in the reports which are also current here that Monsieur Tcharykow's recall is to be attributed to the fact that relations between himself and Monsieur Sazonow who was at one time under his orders at Rome, were never of a friendly character.

On his arrival here Monsieur Tcharykow completely reversed the policy of his predecessor Monsieur Zinovieff who, sceptical to the last as to the success of the Young Turks as represented by the Committee of Union and Progress, always showed that party a marked coldness. Monsieur Tcharykow's aim on the other hand has constantly been to impress upon Turks and others the fact that the interests of Turkey and Russia especially in the Balkans are identical.

(1) [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

There can be little doubt that Monsieur Tcharykow's departure will be regretted in Turkish circles, although socially he and Madame Tcharykow will not be much missed. The manner of recall has given rise to suspicions that there is likely to be a change of policy on the part of Russia towards this country, a policy founded on a Russo-Austrian Entente which is a veritable nightmare to Turks, which has recently been somewhat freely canvassed, and it reminds the Turks unpleasantly of the removal of Baron Mayor des Planches from his post here on the eve of the Turco-Italian war last summer.

It is also significant that Monsieur Mandelstam, the First Dragoman of the Russian Embassy, should be reported at this particular moment to have been withdrawn from Constantinople and given the post of professor at the University of Kiev. Monsieur Mandelstam, who is said to have a great influence over Monsieur Tcharykow, has from the days of the restoration of the Constitution, been outwardly in any case a very warm supporter of the Committee party, and it is he who is credited with having inspired Hussein Djahid to write the articles in the "Tanin," advocating the opening of the Straits to Russia, on which I had the honour to report to you in my despatch No. 921 of the 13th December, 1911.⁽²⁾ The "Tanin" is now the only Turkish paper which has so far made any comment on Monsieur Tcharykow's recall; in a long leading article published yesterday it gratefully recalls Monsieur Tcharykow's instructions to the Russian Consular Officers in this country to maintain the best possible relations with the local authorities and refrain from insisting on the letter of the Capitulations, to the friendly relations which he was able to establish with the Turkish Government, to the manner in which he contrived to so modify the strongly-worded note from his Government on the Malissore question as to prevent its creating an incident between the Powers and finally to his endeavours to bring into being a Balkan Confederation under the hegemony of this country. Is his removal, the "Tanin" asks, the consequence of his failure to bring about this Confederation or the sign of the adoption by his Government of a different policy here? If the same friendly policy is to be maintained, the paper is convinced that it will be hard to find any Ambassador so well fitted to carry it out as was Monsieur Tcharykow, whose departure must be regarded by this country with the sincerest regret.

Monsieur Tcharykow has naturally not in conversation given any indication of the reason of his recall. To me he simply stated that in such matters the Sovereign's wish was obviously dictated by a knowledge of what was best for the country and to that will he was clearly prepared to bow.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

MINUTE.

I think that M. Tcharykow's policy of rapprochement between Turkey and the Balkan States is the right one. We have always advocated it ourselves and if it could be brought about would be a guarantee of peace and should suit Russia. Such a rapprochement would relieve us of any difficulties which might arise with Russia, if she pursued a policy hostile to Turkey.

L. M.
A. N.

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It mentioned the series of articles written by Hussein Djahid in the *Tanin*. (F.O. 505671/30691/11/44.)]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 10651/4/12/44.

(No. 108.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 18, 1912.

The Turkish Amb[assado]r called on the 7th inst[ant] and saw Mr. Mallet, who said that I was apprehensive lest a communication issued by the Wolff Bureau from Berlin on the 29th of February to the effect that Great Britain had made a divergent proposal for mediation which had necessitated new negotiations might lead to a misunderstanding. I had therefore authorized him to explain that this communication evidently referred to the fact that the French G[overnmen]t and H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] had proposed simultaneous enquiries at Rome and Constantinople, as being the most convenient procedure; but that, as other Powers had thought the contrary, the two Gov[ernmen]ts had waived their proposal and had agreed to make enquiries at Rome first. Mr. Mallet added that this method of procedure must not be misinterpreted at Constantinople as favouring one belligerent more than the other.

Tewfik Pasha thanked Mr. Mallet and said that the communication which he had made came opportunely, as he had that morning received a telegram from Constantinople to the effect that the German Gov[ernmen]t had informed the Porte that they were unable to agree to the Russian proposal; that they had proposed, and must insist on, simultaneous enquiries, and that France seemed disposed to agree with them. Mr. Mallet said that he was surprised to hear this, as Sir R. Rodd had reported on the 29th of Feb[ruary] that the German Amb[assado]r had received instructions to exchange views at Rome before approaching Constantinople.⁽¹⁾ In any case, Mr. Mallet added, the proposal had emanated from France.

I am, &c.

E. G[REY].

(¹) [*cp. supra*, p. 368, No. 371.]

No. 385.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey (¹)

F.O. 12555/4/12/44.

(No. 283.)

Sir :—

Constantinople, D. March 20, 1912.

R. March 25, 1912.

The reports which have reached here of the reply of the Italian Government to the request of the Powers to be furnished with Italy's conditions for peace have so far only strengthened the determination of this country to continue the war.

The general sentiment is that whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the result of the engagements which on both sides are claimed as victories, the fact remains that the Italian troops are, with all their advantages, unable to effectively occupy the territories which they have announced to the world they have annexed. Italy is stated to be ready to dispense with a written admission of the annexation of the territories but to demand that Turkey should withdraw her troops. There can be no difference between these two operations and to submit to such humiliating demands is considered here as out of the question. Even were it possible for the Sultan to order his officers and men to cease hostilities, they could not do so without being the victims of their brothers in arms whom they thus propose to abandon. Further it would be the signal for a general rising in all the Arab provinces against the Turks who had thus so basely deserted their fellow countrymen. Such a proceeding would, it is argued, produce a conflagration throughout the country with far worse results than any that could befall the country from the war.

(¹) [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

Italy, it is felt, has set herself to conquer a Turkish province without any provocation on the part of Turkey. Let her do so if possible. But the possibility appears to be remote. It is therefore to be expected that she will carry her operations elsewhere and in spite of various vague indications gleaned in Europe that no attack will be made on the Dardanelles, Turkey must expect it. The outcome is obscure, and opinions as to the chances of Italian success very diverse, but in any case Turkey expects to render a good account of herself and to do considerable damage to the Italian fleet in the event of the attack taking place. Granted that Italy may succeed in forcing the straits with a certain number of ships she will then come to the gates of Constantinople. Will she be allowed by Europe to destroy thus, an undefended city? The idea is, in Turkish opinion, unthinkable. She would be unable to land troops and thus bring pressure to bear, her ships would be unable to coal, and their retreat through the Dardanelles would be as perilous as their passage up. One cannot but think that the actual presence of the Italian fleet here might have such a moral effect that the views now held here might be liable to be considerably modified. The possibility has been suggested here and was referred to by Sir G. Buchanan in his telegram No. 106 of March 15th⁽²⁾ that should the Italian fleet appear here, the Russian Government would demand that she should be allowed to enter the Bosphorus with her fleet. I gather that the Turkish Government are determined at all risks to resist such a suggestion and the possibility of its being effected by force does not appear to alarm them.

I have endeavoured thus briefly to indicate what are the present views of the Turkish Government and people as to the war and to point out that the conditions proposed by Italy are not considered by thinking Turks, who naturally desire to see peace, as forming a possible basis of negotiation.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced, as it refers chiefly to the Turco-Persian frontier question. (F.O. 12555/4/12/44.)]

No. 386.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 12090/4/12/44.

Tel. (No. 124.)

Foreign Office, March 21, 1912, 3 P.M.

Your telegram No. 49.⁽²⁾ My present view is that if anything at all is done the five Powers should ask Porte for conditions in which it would terminate the war and should then, with the views of both Italy and Turkey before them, consult whether any further steps on their part are now possible. But it will be best to leave initiative of making any suggestion to Russia, who can sound us privately if she desires. I agree that Italian peace conditions will be rejected by the Porte and it may be that Russia will of her own accord take that view and not press for action at Constantinople based upon Italian conditions.

⁽¹⁾ [Marginal note by Mr. Maxwell: "Sir A. Nicolson says this Tel[egram] need not be repeated anywhere. R. P. M."]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It referred to a conversation between Sir F. Bertie and M. Poincaré. The latter asked for Sir Edward Grey's views as to the desirability of action by the Powers, either in asking the Porte on what conditions it would terminate the war, or in communicating the Italian conditions. (F.O. 12090/4/12/44.)]

No. 387.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen,⁽¹⁾

F.O. 13870/4/12/44.

Tel. (No. 49.)

Foreign Office, March 29, 1912, 6.7 P.M.

German Ambassador informs me that Russian Gov[ernmen]t have proposed to enquire at Constantinople on what terms Turkey would agree to a cessation of hostilities. German Gov[ernmen]t thought this a fair proposal—treating both Powers alike.

I replied that I had not had any proposal from Russian Gov[ernmen]t, and must wait to see exactly what the form of it was, but that *primâ facie* I saw no objection to making this enquiry at Constantinople, which seemed reasonable and fair, as it was only doing at Constantinople what had been done at Rome.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 290); to Vienna (No. 39); to Paris (No. 137); and to Constantinople (No. 162).]

No. 388.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 15006/4/12/44.

Tel. (No. 149.)

*Foreign Office, April 9, 1912, 3.15 P.M.*Mediation. Russian formula.⁽¹⁾

Please inform M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that I agree with him that it would be better not to mention to Constantinople fact of Italy having communicated her peace conditions. I do not think that it would be desirable to obtain consent of Italy previous to any communication being made to Turkey as this would be treating latter differently from what was the case in regard to action of Powers with Italy. I would prefer to limit steps at Const[antino]ple to a friendly request to be made acquainted with conditions on which Turkey would be disposed to accept mediation with a view to cessation of hostilities.

I will not reply to Russian proposal till I hear from you as to whether M. Poincaré concurs with above.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately succeeding document.]

⁽²⁾ [Sir F. Bertie reported that the Minister for Foreign Affairs had accepted the Russian proposal. Tel. No. 55 of April 11. (F.O. 15124/4/12/44).]

No. 389.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 15169/4/12/44.

Tel. (No. 193.)

Foreign Office, April 11, 1912, 5.30 P.M.

Mediation.

Russian Gov[ernmen]t have proposed following formula:—

“Les Puissances ayant pu constater que sous certaines conditions l'Italie serait disposée à admettre une intervention amicale des Puissances en vue d'arriver à la cessation des hostilités, s'adressent dans le même esprit d'amitié à la Sublime Porte

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 151); to St. Petersburg (No. 338), to Vienna (No. 40); to Berlin (No. 51); and to Rome (No. 151).]

pour la prier de leur communiquer les conditions auxquelles elle accepterait leur médiation en vue d'arriver à la cessation des hostilités."

As soon as your colleagues have rec[eive]d similar instr[uctio]ns you are authorised to make a communic[atio]n in this sense to the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t.

No. 390.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, April 13, 1912.

F.O. 15556/4/12/44.

D. 5 P.M.

Tel. (No. 148.)

R. 6 P.M.

Your telegram No. 193 of 11th April to Constantinople.⁽¹⁾

Minister for Foreign Affairs tells me that he proposes to postpone communication to Turkish Government till after the meeting of the new Chamber, as he has reason to believe that such a course would be agreeable to both Turkish and Italian Governments.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document]

No. 391.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

Constantinople, April 16, 1912.

F.O. 16020/4/12/44.

D. 1.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 91.) R.

R. 3.30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 193.⁽¹⁾

Verbal communication made this morning to T[urkish] M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs]; Russian chargé d'affaires being the first to make it followed by other representatives in order of seniority. M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] said that he hoped to give reply within a week and expressed satisfaction that communication did not quote the conditions demanded by Italy. To have done so would, in his opinion, have been to endorse them, and amounted to breach of neutrality.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 384-5, No. 389.]

[ED. NOTE.—The first intimation that the Italians were bombarding the forts at the entrance to the Dardanelles was received by a telegram timed 11.30 A.M. on April 18, forwarded by the Eastern Telegraph Company. A telegram was then sent to Sir G. Lowther at 3.45 P.M. asking for information (F.O. 16285/8565/12/44) and a telegram from him (No. 95) received at 5.35 P.M. stated that the outside fort of the Dardanelles had been attacked that morning by four Italian battleships and twenty torpedo-boats. One battleship was damaged and forced to retire from the fighting line. The attack continued. The Minister for Foreign Affairs had also reported an attack on Samos. (F.O. 16468/8565/12/44.) At 8.30 P.M. Sir G. Lowther reported that the passage of the Dardanelles was closed to foreign shipping. (F.O. 16808/8565/12/44.)]

No. 392.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 16311/8565/12/44.

Constantinople, D. April 18, 1912, 8 P.M.

Tel. (No. 97.)

R. April 19, 1912, 8 A.M.

My telegram No. 95 of Ap[ril] 18.⁽²⁾

Following from Consul at Dardanelles:—

Italian ships bombard from 8,000 yards. Several merchant vessels have been allowed to pass up but the Ottoman contact mine ships are on the way to fill channel.

I am embarking the English subjects on the salvage boats.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations; to the Board of Trade.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. *v. Ed. note immediately preceding.*]

No. 393.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Rome, April 19, 1912.

F.O. 16514/8565/12/44.

D. 7.20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 52.)

R. 11 P.M.

Bombardment of Dardanelles forts.

Minister for Foreign Affairs begs me to report to you immediately the circumstances under which engagement unexpectedly took place yesterday. Italian fleet cruising in the Ægean Sea on the night of the 17th to 18th cut Dardanelles cable at Imbros and Lemnos. One division of four battle-ships with small craft was ordered to appear at dawn in Dardanelles in the hope that Turkish fleet about equal in strength might be drawn into action. There was no intention to attack forts, and admiral in command had (? no) instructions to do so. Turkish destroyer having been sighted near the entrance, division advanced towards her, whereupon forts opened fire at long range. Italian ships then replied, and continued for about two hours to fire upon outer forts, after which they withdrew, having suffered no damage of any kind, and they are now returning to Taranto.

(Confidential.)

Minister for Foreign Affairs is anxious that accidental character of engagement should be appreciated. He fears that Turkish Government may try to close Dardanelles, and wishes to preclude any representations here from His Majesty's Government which might have unfortunate effect on Italian public opinion, which has been prepared by German and Austrian press to anticipate possible intervention. Position of Italy is as follows: She had not intended any attack on Dardanelles at present time; she must reserve to herself liberty to attack Turkey in any way to her advantage, and Turkish apprehensions on account of Dardanelles are an asset to her; but in practice such an attack is not likely to be realised either soon or at any time.

MINUTES

Mr. Vansittart's theory⁽²⁾ is very possibly correct.

I think however that we have said enough for the present and that it would be better

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [A long minute by Mr. Vansittart, which has been omitted from considerations of space, suggested that the Italian version could hardly be credited, as it had been clear from the beginning that the Turkish fleet was not going to venture out.]

to hold our hand for a few days and see whether some other Power does not come forward with a suggestion for asking Italy to give some assurance not to attack the Dardanelles—for that is what the communication of the last 4 lines of this telegram to Turkey would amount to. Our last suggestion in this direction was not well received. We can at any [rate] wait until we have an answer from Constantinople to the telegram sent to-day ⁽³⁾

L. M.

Await reply to tel[egram] to Const[antino]ple and take no action at Rome.

A. N.

⁽³⁾ [i.e., April 20 *cp. infra*, p. 388, No 396]

No. 394.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 16585/8565/12.

Rome, D. April 19, 1912, 8.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 58.)

R. April 20, 1912, 8 A.M.,

My immediately preceding tel.⁽²⁾

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] regards recent action of Italian Admiral as a double error because there was no likelihood of drawing Turkish fleet and because Italian withdrawal after bombardment will be hailed as success by Turkey. He personally considers that any attempt to force the Dardanelles would be a great mistake and lead to no result. I gather that division of fleet which did not go to the Dardanelles may take some action among islands.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Constantinople (as No. 217). Copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document]

No. 395.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.

F.O. 17088/8565/12/44.

(No. 81.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 19, 1912.

The Italian Chargé d'Aff[aire]s called to-day and read to Sir A. Nicolson a telegram from the M[arqu]is di San Giuliano, of which the following is the substance:—

An Italian squadron was ordered to the neighbourhood of the Dardanelles. When there the telegraph cables at Imbros and at Tenedos and elsewhere were cut. The squadron then cruised in front of the entrance of the Dardanelles in the hope of enticing the Turkish fleet to emerge. There was only a Turkish destroyer visible, and she did not venture out. While the squadron was thus operating two Turkish forts opened fire on the vessels, and the Italians were obliged to reply. The firing lasted for two hours, and no damage was done to the Italian vessels, and no casualties were caused. The squadron then left for Italy. No news has been received from a second Italian squadron which is operating in the Lower Ægean.

Sir A. Nicolson told the M[arqu]is Manzoni that he could not conceal his regret at the action which had been taken, as it naturally caused the Turkish Auth[oriti]es to adopt defensive measures, and the consequence was that the Dardanelles, which was in an unique and special position being the only entrance and exit for the great Black Sea trade, was closed to commerce. This was a most serious matter to this country, and would naturally cause much discontent. Sir A. Nicolson said it was not for him to criticize the method of conducting a campaign: but he did not see what object the Italian squadron had in view. M[arqu]is Manzoni said that in his telegram M[arqu]is di San Giuliano had stated that there was no intention of forcing the Straits or of landing troops, and merely a demonstration of force was intended in order

to impress the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t. Sir A. Nicolson remarked that he hardly imagined that the Turks could be much impressed by what had occurred: and he could only repeat that he was extremely sorry that action had been taken which compelled the Turks to take defensive measures which would cause grave injury to neutral commerce. No one could blame the Turks. M[arqui]s Manzoni observed that the forts were the first to open fire. Sir A. Nicolson replied that even if this were the case, it was but natural that seeing a hostile fleet approaching they imagined an attempt would be made to force an entrance which it was the duty of the forts to protect.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

No. 396.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 16536/8565/12/44.

Tel. (No. 215.)

Foreign Office, April 20, 1912, 12.30 P.M.

Please ascertain and telegraph inform[at]ion as to what has actually been done with respect to the disposition of mines in the Dardanelles and whether any, and if so how many have been set free, and whether any steps have been taken to prevent them from being carried through the Straits into the open sea. I recognise the rights of Turkish Gov[ernmen]t to adopt such legitimate means of defence as they may consider necessary, but I trust that it may be found possible to revert to the system adopted prior to Italian attack, and thus open a passage to foreign commerce to and from the Black Sea. At this season it is of the highest importance that the Black Sea trade should suffer as little delay and inconvenience as possible. I may add that as regards floating mines H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t at The Hague Conference took strong exception to their employment,⁽²⁾ and their views have not changed on this point.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Rome (No. 157).]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. Gooch & Temperley, Vol. VIII, p. 224, No. 193, p. 245, No. 206.*]

No. 397.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd

F.O. 17247/8565/12/44.

(No. 79.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 22, 1912.

The Italian Ambass[ador] called to-day. He told Sir A. Nicolson privately that he had been opposed to any action at the Dardanelles, and that he hoped that he had succeeded in preventing an attack which had been contemplated against Smyrna. He had advocated the occupation of an island or two.

Sir A. Nicolson told the Marquis Imperiali that it would be an impertinence on his part to criticise any method of campaign adopted by either belligerent, but that he could not conceal from H[is] E[xc]cellency that the closure of the Straits, for which we could not blame the Turks, was causing the gravest injury to British commercial and shipping interests.

The Marquis Imperiali asked if we could not protest at Constantinople. Sir A. Nicolson replied that this would be going too far: all we had done was to express in a friendly manner the hope that the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t would find it possible to open a passage for commerce through the Straits. It was possible that they would

hesitate to do this so long as Italian ships were hovering about. The Ambass[ado]r said that all ships had been withdrawn from the vicinity of the Straits. Sir A. Nicolson said he was not so sure that they had—but he wished that they would. The Ambass[ado]r expressed the fervent hope that we would not ask for any assurances from the Italian Gov[ernmen]t that they would abstain from hostilities near the Straits, and that we would not take the initiative in anything disagreeable to the Italian Gov[ernmen]t. Sir A. Nicolson said that he did not contemplate that we should take any initiative in anything disagreeable—and he did not think that it was at present intended to ask for any assurances. Still we could give no pledge as to what we might not be compelled to do in the interests of our trade, as he thought Sir E. Grey had already told H[is] E[xc]ellency] on a former occasion.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY].

No. 398.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.

F.O. 17391/8565/12/44.

(No. 134.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 22, 1912.

The Russian Ambassador informed Sir A. Nicolson to-day that very great pressure had been put upon the Russian Gov[ernmen]t to take strong measures for opening the Dardanelles, as their closure was causing the greatest injury to Russian commerce. The Russian Gov[ernmen]t had, therefore, addressed a representation to the Porte to the following effect:

The Russian Gov[ernmen]t were unaware how the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t could reconcile the free passage of the Straits accorded to merchant vessels by Treaty with the present measure of closing the Straits. They, therefore, expressed the "firm hope" that, so soon as the imminent danger of a hostile attack had passed by, the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t would open the Straits to foreign commerce. Otherwise the Russian Gov[ernmen]t would have to consider the question of demanding indemnities for the losses incurred.

C[oun]t Benckendorff asked whether we had taken any steps and Sir A. Nicolson informed him of what we had telegraphed to Sir G. Lowther.⁽¹⁾ Sir A. Nicolson remarked that the threat of exacting indemnities was rather a strong measure. Count Benckendorff observed that it was a milder measure than threatening to send ships to open the Straits, which had been suggested in some quarters of Russian public opinion. The Gov[ernmen]t had been so bombarded by Russian commercial circles that they were forced to take a stiff attitude.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY].

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 388, No. 396.]

[*ED. NOTE.*—On April 29, Count Benckendorff had a further interview with Sir A. Nicolson at which he left a communication to the effect that the attitude of the Porte made the moment unsuitable for a continuation of attempts at mediation, but that M. Sazonov hoped that the exchange of views between neutrals would continue. (F.O. 18262/4/12/44.) *cp. Siebert-Benckendorff*, Vol. II, p. 361.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 18473/8565/12/44.

Tel. (No. 260.)

Foreign Office, April 30, 1912, 6.15 P.M.

Decision of Turkish Gov[ernmen]t not to open any passage through Straits is very disappointing and serious. Shipowners here state that 150 merchant ships mostly British representing nearly 1 million tons and in money value about 6,000,000*l.*, laden with cargoes of very considerable value in addition to this sum are held up. Shipowners have already lost about 100,000*l.* and each day's delay involves a loss to British Shipowners of at least 9,000*l.* About 4,000 British officers and sailors are detained. Besides this value of cargoes of maize may rapidly deteriorate.

Some measure of temporary relief is essential to enable this congestion of traffic so unexpectedly held up to be relieved and to avoid further hardship and loss on vessels and cargoes now detained.

You should at once urge Turkish Gov[ernmen]t strongly to open a passage at any rate temporarily for sufficient time to enable vessels now blocked to pass in and out through the Straits. Apart from the fact that there does not seem to be any prospect of any immediate attack upon Dardanelles Turkish Gov[ernmen]t could surely close at short notice in case of danger the small passage that need be cleared to enable shipping now blocked to be piloted through Straits.

Question is very urgent, and you should get reply from Turkish Gov[ernmen]t without delay.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 192); to Berlin (No. 56); to St. Petersburg (No. 410); to Vienna (No. 44); to Rome (No. 174).]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 18473/8565/12/44.

Tel. (No. 175.)

Foreign Office, April 30, 1912, 6.35 P.M.

You should inform Minister for Foreign Affairs of substance of my telegram No. 260 to Sir G. Lowther,⁽²⁾ and say that if Italian Gov[ernmen]t can facilitate the relief desired by enabling us to say to Turkish Gov[ernmen]t that there will be no attack upon the Straits for a reasonable period while channel is opened for purpose described in my telegram to Sir G. Lowther, their action will be very much appreciated here.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 411); to Paris (No. 193); to Berlin (No. 57); to Vienna (No. 45).]

⁽²⁾ [v immediately preceding document, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 18536/8565/12/44.

Tel. (No. 59.)

Rome, D. May 1, 1912, 8.30 P.M.

R. May 2, 1912, 8 A.M.

Your telegram No. (? 175).⁽²⁾

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] received communication in a very friendly manner saying it made it clear that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] fully appreciated Italy's belligerent rights. He must refer to Prime Minister Minister for War and Minister of Marine and consider the proposal in all its bearings. Meanwhile he submitted following considerations. Russia has renewed protest to Turkey and claimed the unconditional opening of the Straits to commerce unless danger existed. So many forts had to be passed before the ships could arrive at narrow passage that it was obvious that Turkey could rely on having ample warning of such imminent danger. Russia was defending a principle which was important to the whole of Europe. Would not Russian standpoint be weakened were Turkey enabled to claim that the straits were only opened temporarily and subject to the condition that Italy would not attack during the temporary period?

He asked whether we had consulted Russia and had realised her point of view. Russia had shewn Italy so much good-will that it would be difficult for Italy to act contrary to her interests until the steps she was now taking had failed; should they succeed suggested undertaking for Italy would not be necessary, should they fail then would be the moment to fall back on temporary opening and he would in the meantime consult his colleagues and be ready with his reply.

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] said that he feared that reply in the House of Commons yesterday⁽³⁾ suggesting an armistice for the straits already weakened the Russian standpoint. He also mentioned that Italy was assured of the non-inter-vention of Germany, Austria and France.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence, to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

⁽³⁾ [Parl. Deb., 5th Ser. (House of Commons), Vol 37, p 1483.]

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 18496/8565/12/44.

Tel. (No. 142.)

Constantinople, D. May 1, 1912, 11.15 P.M.

R. May 2, 1912, 8 A.M.

My telegram No. 140.⁽²⁾

Porte has informed me by note that it has been decided to open Dardanelles under same conditions as existed before its closing, namely, that vessels must pass with pilots.

Opening will take place as soon as mines can be removed.⁽³⁾

It is added that Ottoman Government maintains its absolute right to close completely Dardanelles as soon as necessity may arise.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It reported that Sir G. Lowther had strongly urged the desirability of opening the Straits. (F.O. 18471/8565/12/44.)]

⁽³⁾ [A circular telegram consisting of the first two paragraphs above was sent to all the shipping firms that had applied to the Foreign Office.]

No. 403.

Sir G. Louther to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 19064/19064/12/41.

(No. 370.)

Constantinople, D. May 1, 1912.

Sir,

R. May 6, 1912.

I have the honour to forward herewith a Despatch, as marked in the margin, from the Military Attaché to this Embassy, for transmission to the War Office, reporting on a recent conversation he had with the Minister of War in which His Excellency blamed Anglo-French policy for the present state of affairs between Italy and Turkey.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure in No. 403.

Major Tyrrell to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 34.)

Sir,

Constantinople, April 29, 1912.

I have the honour to inform you that I saw Mahmud Shevket Pasha this afternoon. His Excellency appeared to be in an irritable and nervous frame of mind, and was at first inclined to be sulky. However he brightened up after a little, and said that it was as clear as daylight that the present situation was due to England and France, and that it was our fault that Italy had to all intents and purposes blockaded the Dardanelles, for that was what her presence in the Ægean amounted to. He went further, and said that England and France were primarily responsible for the war.

I expressed my surprise at hearing him talk like this, remarking that during all these months he had never taken this line, and that it was more generally considered that if any foreign Powers were to be blamed for Italy's action in attacking the Tripolitaine, those Powers were Italy's allies.

He said:—No, England and France were the two great Mediterranean Powers. Italy would not have dared to do anything in the Mediterranean without their permission. England had only to hold up her finger and Italy would not have stirred. It was all a question of the equilibrium of the Mediterranean. What we were doing to allow Italy to establish herself, first on the African coast and then in the Ægean, he could not imagine.

Mahmud Pasha, the sous-chef of the General Staff, who was present at our interview, recalled that many years ago when Italy proposed to take Tripoli, it had merely been necessary for Lord Beaconsfield to forbid it, and nothing happened. Exactly the same conditions obtained to-day. If England chose to forbid Italy to do this or that in the Mediterranean or elsewhere, she would have to obey, and there would be no question of a war with her.

With this Mahmud Shevket Pasha agreed. He said that the Triple Alliance did not bind either of the other contracting parties to intervene on Italy's behalf if a war with England arose from her wanton attack on Turkey or from her action in forcing the closing of the Dardanelles. On the contrary, Austria at least would be delighted to see Italy get a good beating.

Austria had two policies (1) a strong Turkey (2) if Turkey were weakened or broken up, either by external attack or by internal disorder, to be sure that she herself and not Italy secured Albania. In pursuance of the first of these two policies Austria would always support Turkey against Russia, and would do her best to overawe the

(1) [A copy of this despatch and enclosure was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

Balkan States, while any action against Turkey's present enemy would be well received by her, and would accord with her policy. It was only if we failed to check Italy now, that Austria might be forced to consider her second policy. Thus the responsibility for the situation came back to England.

I must say that my own impression regarding Austria's policy towards Turkey, gathered from conversations with Austrians here, accords with what Mahmud Shevket Pasha said on this subject.

He then went on to say that he had always spoken frankly both to Your Excellency and to myself, that he had always been in favour of an understanding with England and had always advocated a friendly policy towards us. He did not mind telling me that 80% of the concession given to the British Government a few days ago was due to his own influence and exertions with his colleagues. And what was the return we were making for it? A consistently unfriendly attitude from the beginning of the war with Italy. In Egypt, where treaty rights allowed him to march troops across the country to the relief of Tripoli, he had done nothing, out of deference to, and friendliness for, England, whereas we had stretched our neutrality there in favour of Italy, and had even sent back Turkish officers practically as prisoners. He said that the Turks were endeavouring to convince England in every possible way of the reality of their affection for her, but that we turned a deaf ear, and gave nothing for all that they had conceded.

I pointed out that alliances and ententes were not made in a day, or a week, but were the fruit of years of rapprochement, and that if during the last three years there had been estrangement rather than rapprochement, the Turks had only themselves to blame, and were now learning that a mistaken policy is not so easily and quickly repaired as he appeared to imagine.

He also alluded to the Navy. "You have always been against our navy," he said "all the English have said, 'What does Turkey want a strong navy for?' and I was always inclined to agree, but does not this war show that we do want a navy?" I said that no Englishman had said that Turkey might never want a navy. The mistake lay in a policy which led to her finding herself without a navy and without a friend who might supply the deficiency.

Finally he said "The truth of the matter is that you and France are trying to detach Italy from the Triple Alliance. Germany and Austria are trying to keep her there. So Italy finds herself in a brilliant position and can do what she likes. Now what is the value of Italy as an ally? She is worthless. Turkey is far stronger and more worthy, and yet no one wants her for an ally."

I ventured to answer this by remarking that Turkey's search for an ally was inseparably bound up with the question of her internal administration and a good government, respects in which she had, since 1908, disappointed all Europe.

This led to his expatiating on the difficulties with which Turkey had to contend, in the course of which he alluded to Russia's intrigues with certain Kurdish Beys. "Anyhow," he said, "I can assure you of our *bonne volonté*. What we want is help, and that is what no one will give us. We are willing to govern well and we want to govern well, but the difficulties raised by others are too great, and we fail, for want of help."

In spite of what he said, Mahmud Shevket's tone was quite amicable. He spoke rather in sorrow than in anger, and it seemed to me that his long tirade was a trifle forced and was made with some object.

After leaving him I happened to meet one of the newly elected M.P.'s, who took me aside to ask what we were going to do about Italy's action in the *Ægean*. His line in Parliament, he said, would be to advocate at all costs an Anglophil policy, which was what all Turkey wanted, and he wished to explain to me that the interests of England and Turkey were identical, for two reasons, first that we were a great Mussulman Power, and that the question of the Caliphate was one which affected us deeply, as Turkey could always make things very uncomfortable for us if she wanted to. I had no time to wait for his second reason, but advised him not to harp on the

Caliphate idea as far as England and her Mussulmans were concerned, for it would help neither his country nor the policy which he professed to have at heart.

I have, &c.

G. E. TYRRELL, *Major,*
Military Attaché.

No. 404.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 18496/8565/12/44.

Tel. (No. 274.)

Foreign Office, May 2, 1912, 6 p.m.

Your tel[egram] No. 142 (of May 1. Dardanelles).⁽¹⁾

You sh[oul]d thank Turkish Gov[ernmen]t for their action.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 391, No. 402.]

⁽²⁾ [A further telegram (No. 270) was sent to Sir G. Lowther on the same day, asking for an approximate idea how long it would take to remove mines. (F.O. 18496/8565/12/44.)]

No. 405.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir A. Nicolson.

(Private.) ⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

British Embassy, St. Petersburg, May 2, 1912.

I have no news that will not keep till, as I hope, we meet next week.

I am relieved to see by this morning's papers that the Turks are going to open the Dardanelles. I had hoped from the way in which Sazonoff spoke some ten days ago about the Italian demonstration that he would have joined us in friendly representations at Rome. When, however, I approached him on the subject, he absolutely declined to do so. I asked him what he hoped to gain by so assiduously courting Italy. He replied—"I don't want Italy to send, as she has undertaken to do, Army Corps into Galicia, in the event of a Russo-German War." After a moment's pause he added "She won't do this now." I could not get him to say anything more—but those were his actual words and they are very significant. . . .⁽²⁾

Even yours,

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. IV of 1912.]

⁽²⁾ [The last paragraph of this letter is entirely personal.]

[*ED. NOTE.*—On May 15 a conversation took place between Count Benckendorff and Sir Edward Grey, which is reported by the former in *Siebert-Benckendorff*, Vol. II, p. 367. Sir Edward Grey said "I was sure the Italian Government would like to find some way of ending the war, if they could get round their Decree of Annexation of Tripoli. They had themselves said in general terms that they would be prepared to receive suggestions; and, from information which reached me, I was convinced that they would be willing to consider the payment of an annual sum as recognition of the spiritual Khalifate. To emphasise that it was in recognition of this, the money could be paid to the Sheikh-ul-Islam." (F.O. 21200/4/12/44.)]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie

F.O. 28109/4/12/44.

(No. 269.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 5, 1912.

M. Cambon read to Sir A. Nicolson on May 24 a telegram from M. Poincaré to the following effect:—

Said P[ash]a had mentioned to M. Bompard that Turkey would be disposed to consider proposals for terminating the war and that perhaps France would take the initiative in sounding other Powers on the subject. Rifaat P[ash]a observed to M. Poincaré that the moment might be opportune for convoking a Conference which should limit itself strictly and solely to the Italo-Turkish difficulty, to the exclusion of every other question. M. Tittoni had also mentioned the possibility of calling together a Conference and that Italy would be ready to accept any combination "which would safeguard her honour and interests in fact without raising the question of right."

From these several steps M. Poincaré considered that it might be possible to examine seriously the question of a Conference, which should, in his opinion, limit itself strictly to the Tripoli question, excluding even that of the islands which Italy has seized in the *Ægean* Sea. M. Cambon said that M. Poincaré would like to have my opinion.

M. Cambon thought, and he intended to mention it to M. Poincaré, that the question of the islands must be considered at the Conference; and he also was of opinion that St. Petersburg should be sounded as to the view of Russia in respect to a Conference. Sir A. Nicolson pointed out to M. Cambon that it would be difficult to draw up a form of invitation which would be acceptable to both belligerents, and which would avoid on the one hand confirming the fact of annexation in advance, and on the other hand of leaving it open to discussion. However a formula might be found. Another difficulty would be that of keeping the Straits question out of discussion. Sir A. Nicolson said that he did not wish to raise difficulties, but these were one or two which occurred to him. He added that he would submit the question to me.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE.

I think the islands will have to come in and I doubt whether the Straits can be kept out: after what passed with M. Isvolsky we cannot object to Russia raising the question of the Straits provided she does it on the lines agreed with M. Isvolsky in 1908⁽¹⁾ in London. It will be desirable to take some soundings beforehand as to how the Conference is to bring about a settlement of the war—the present position is that Italy and Turkey are officially poles apart as to their terms and that no Power will propose any solution that is likely to offend either of the belligerents. We must have some indication that this position is modified before we all meet round a table.

M. Cambon may be told what I said to Benckendorff⁽²⁾ about Italy paying an annual sum to the Sheikh-ul-Islam or rather to Turkey through the Sheikh-ul-Islam.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, p. 441, No. 377; pp. 451-2, No. 387; p. 456, No. 394.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 394, *Ed. note.*]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.

F.O. 24483/4/12/44.

(No. 124.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 5, 1912.

As the Italian Ambassador spoke to me to-day about the war between Italy and Turkey, I told him that I had communicated to Count Benckendorff the suggestion

of an annual payment to the Sheikh-ul-Islam, not as in itself providing a solution, but as a suggestion worth having when further efforts were made with a view to mediation.

The Ambassador said that he now no longer thought that a settlement would be reached by mediation or by the action of the five Powers; but if England and Germany could act together in Constantinople, it might be possible to get the Turkish Government to accept some solution. The view of Baron Marschall, which coincided with that of some Turks in touch with the Committee in Turkey, was that the Turkish Government might cede Tripoli to some Moslem Authority, who would then transfer it to Italy. A similar solution had, he believed, once been adopted in the case of the Crimea.

I said that, as Baron Marschall would come here fresh from Constantinople, I should be interested to hear from him what solution he thought could be found.

In the course of this conversation the Ambassador stated that, in his view, the Italian Gov[ernmen]t might have to occupy more islands, but if they did so might simultaneously make an announcement that they were not going to attack the Straits. I said it was most important that the Straits should not be closed.

I am, &c.

E. G[REY].

No. 408.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 24771/4/12/44.

(No. 280)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 6, 1912.

M. Cambon told me to-day that both the Turkish Ambassador and the Italian Ambassador in Paris had spoken of a Conference to settle the Turco-Italian war as if their Governments were favourable to the idea. Further enquiries had shown that the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs considered that a Conference was impossible: and M. Poincaré had felt that, if there was a Conference, it should be limited entirely to the question of the war.

M. Cambon had pointed out that the question of the islands, in the *Ægean* occupied by the Italians would necessarily come up. The Greek population in the islands would appeal for a guarantee of protection against Turkish reprisals when the Italians withdrew, and the Powers in the Conference would have to occupy themselves with this. Then other Greek and Christian populations in the Turkish Empire would make appeals to the Powers. The question of the Straits would be raised from the commercial point of view after the experience which we had had when they were blocked the other day. This would oblige Russia to raise the strategic side of the question of the Straits.

In M. Cambon's opinion, it would soon be desirable that the question of admitting Russia to the Mediterranean should be considered. The Triple Alliance had, it was believed, to be renewed at the end of this year. It might very likely be extended to cover the Mediterranean, and Germany as the price of her support in the Mediterranean might get from Italy a coaling station in Tripoli, that would eventually become a German naval station. At present, France had naval preponderance over Italy and Austria combined, and this would last until 1915 in any case. But, if Germany came into the Mediterranean, the ratio of forces would be different, and it would be very desirable that the political relations of France and ourselves with Russia should be such that Russia could be admitted to the Mediterranean to improve the situation. To raise the question of the Straits in this sense would prevent Russia from entering into conversations in Berlin and Rome of which we might know nothing. In a short time, therefore, it might positively be desirable that a Conference should take place, in order that the question of the Straits might be dealt with: but we ought not to be caught unaware, and it might be useful to discuss the question of the Straits soon between London, Paris, and St. Petersburg.

I told M. Cambon that I thought there was much force in what he said. I could speak only personally at the moment, but I assumed that the Cabinet would be prepared to maintain the attitude as to the Straits that had been agreed to with M. Isvolsky in 1908, namely: that the Treaty should be revised so as to give Russia, in time of peace, freedom to go in and out through the Straits; and in time of war to secure that there were equal facilities given by Turkey to other belligerents. As to the extension of the Triple Alliance to the Mediterranean, it had occurred to me that, when the war between Italy and Turkey was over, and the time came to recognise the sovereignty of Italy over Tripoli, we might propose to Italy some reciprocal arrangement under which we would guarantee not to disturb her "status quo" in Tripoli if she undertook not to disturb the "status quo" in Egypt and Tunis. Such an arrangement would give her security, and deprive her of the motive for extending the Triple Alliance to the Mediterranean, that she would have if she were afraid of being disturbed by us.

M. Cambon appreciated this suggestion as being very relevant to what he had said.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

No. 409.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Paris, June 8, 1912.

D. 6:30 P.M.

R. 11 P.M.

F.O. 24531/24531/12/44.

Tel. (No. 77.) Confidential. K.

M. Paléologue came to see me today on behalf of the Minister for Foreign Affairs in order to make following communication for transmission to you:—

On 6th June Russian Ambassador informed Minister for Foreign Affairs with much hesitation and embarrassment, that at particular request of German Emperor, His Majesty and Emperor of Russia are to meet in Finnish waters on 3rd July, but the meeting is to be devoid of political meaning.

Minister for Foreign Affairs enlarged to M. Isvolsky on inopportuneness of such a meeting at a time when, owing to war between Italy and Turkey, there is a crisis in affairs of Near East. It would, he said to Ambassador, be difficult to persuade French public that there would be no political intention in meeting of the two sovereigns, but he assumed that they would not be accompanied by Ministers.

M. Isvolsky said that there would not be any Ministers. Yesterday M. Isvolsky informed M. Paléologue that as German Emperor had announced his intention of being accompanied by the German Chancellor, it would be necessary that Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs should also be present, and M. Isvolsky stated that he had only said to French Minister for Foreign Affairs that he thought that there would not be any Ministers at meeting. Minister for Foreign Affairs, however, took note in writing of Ambassador's communication which had been that there would not be any Ministers. Their presence will, of course, make the meeting a great political event, of which German Emperor will take advantage to assume part of arbiter and settler of the differences between Italy and Turkey.

M. Paléologue has, on behalf of Minister for Foreign Affairs, pointed out to M. Isvolski the grave political dangers of the proposed meeting, of which dangers Ambassador stated that he was quite aware and at which he professed himself, and M. Paléologue thinks sincerely, to be much alarmed. M. Paléologue has the impression that Russian Ambassador at Paris has not been consulted on subject and is annoyed and generally perturbed at meeting having been arranged.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

French Minister for Foreign Affairs considers that it would be too great strain on understandings which unite France, Russia and England to await without action the event and outcome of the meeting. It is he thinks necessary to make a counter-move in anticipation of the two Emperors meeting.

French Government have reliable information that German and Austrian Governments warned Italian Government not to occupy Mitylene or Chios, and that Russian Government subsequently gave a like warning.

French Minister for Foreign Affairs proposes, for your consideration, and also for that of the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs through the French Ambassador in St. Petersburg, that British, Russian, and French Governments shall at once make an agreement or declaration in following or some other form of a like effect, so that if and when the German Emperor proposes to Emperor of Russia a Germano-Russian understanding, the latter Sovereign may be in a position to state that he has already come to an agreement which precludes him from entering into a separate understanding with Germany.

Minister for Foreign Affairs is open to any suggestions in regards to the form and wording of the declaration, which, as drafted, is as follows:—

“(F) Les Gouvernements britannique, français et russe constatent avec satisfaction la conformité de leurs vues sur les conditions dans lesquelles ils pourront, en temps opportun, coopérer le plus efficacement au rétablissement de la paix entre l’Italie et la Turquie. Ils estiment qu’une intervention amicale des Puissances n’aurait chance de succès que si l’objet en était strictement limité au terme précis du litige qui a motivé le conflit. Elles devraient donc souscrire avant toute délibération un pacte général de désintéressement. Les trois Gouvernements s’engagent dès maintenant à combiner leurs efforts pour rallier à leurs vues les autres Puissances intéressées dans les affaires orientales.”

(K) French Minister for Foreign Affairs considers that, unless some such declaration be made or agreement concluded at once, the announcement, which will certainly be made very soon, of the intended meeting will have a very evil effect on general political situation and on relations between Russia and France.

He trusts that you will give the matter your earnest and immediate consideration.

MINUTES.

It is being dealt with by Secretary of State—no action on this tel[egram].

A. N

I had already received a communication verbally from M. Cambon and replied to it in conversation before these minutes could have reached me.⁽²⁾ I have recorded the conversation.⁽³⁾

E. G.

10.6.12.

⁽²⁾ [The minutes by Mr. Vansittart, Mr. Norman and Mr. Maxwell dated June 10 are omitted on account of their length.]

⁽³⁾ [v. immediately succeeding document.]

No. 410.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 25456/24531/12/44.

(No. 292.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 10, 1912.

M. Cambon came to-day to make to me the proposal and to suggest the formula described in your telegram No. 77 of the 8th instant,⁽¹⁾ and he asked my opinion.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

I said that, to ask Russia beforehand to come to a general agreement of "désintéressement" would be practically to ask her to promise not to raise the question of the Straits in connection with any settlement of the war between Italy and Turkey. In 1908 I had come to an agreement with M. Iswolsky on this question, but had pressed him, for the special reasons existing at that time, not to embarrass Turkey by raising the question then. The declaration now proposed would look like an attempt on our part, four years later, again to head Russia off from the question. I could not very well do this after what I had said to M. Iswolsky in 1908.⁽²⁾ Besides this, if the three Powers, France, Russia, and England, made this declaration to each other, and it became known, the result would be to precipitate the formation of two groups of Powers with regard to the settlement of the Italian-Turkish war: France, Russia, and England would be one group, and this would tend to throw Germany and Italy, and I supposed Austria, more closely together. This would be undesirable.

I suggested, therefore, that M. Sazonoff should be asked to keep us informed of what passed respecting the war at the meeting between the two Emperors, and to promise not to enter into any separate engagement with Germany regarding it. He might very well say, if pressed by Germany at the meeting, that from the beginning the policy approved by Russia had been that of keeping the five Powers in touch; that he knew France and England were attached to this policy; and that this precluded him from entering into separate arrangements.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

(²) [*v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, p. 441, No. 377, pp. 451-2, No. 387; p. 456, No. 394.]

No. 411.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

F.O. 25243/4/12/44.

(No. 205.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 10, 1912.

Count Benckendorff informed me to-day that M. Poincaré had proposed to M. Sazonoff that Russia, England, and France "s'entendent pour établir un mode d'action, dans le but de pacification entre l'Italie et la Turquie." This had M. Sazonoff's sympathy.

Count Benckendorff added confidentially that M. Cambon had spoken to him last week as to the desirability of a discussion of possible eventualities between England, Russia, and France; he therefore supposed that this was what M. Poincaré meant.

It was, however, clear to me that M. Poincaré was really trying to prepare M. Sazonoff for the declaration suggested in Sir Francis Bertie's telegram number 77, of the 8th instant:⁽¹⁾ which was not at all what M. Cambon had in his mind last week. I therefore said that, if M. Poincaré meant what M. Cambon had meant that the three Powers should talk over eventualities in connection with the settlement of the war, it had my sympathy as well as M. Sazonoff's. I did not wish to propound any definite questions, but the future of the islands in the Ægean Sea and the question of the Straits were no doubt suitable for consideration. I hoped, however, that M. Poincaré did not mean separate action by the three Powers, for this would lead to the formation of two opposing groups of Powers with regard to the settlement of the war, Italy being in the group in which we were not. One result of this would be to fix Italy more firmly than ever in the Triple Alliance. Our object ought to be to keep the five Powers together as far as action with regard to the war was concerned.

I am, &c.
E. G[REY].

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 397-8, No. 409.]

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Vienna, June 12, 1912.

F.O. 25188/25188/12/44.

D. 12.3 P.M.

Tel. (No. 54.) Very Confidential.

R. 5.5 P.M.

Near East.

Indications have been reaching me of late that, in spite of hopeful tone used by Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs to myself and my colleagues, his Excellency is not quite reassured as to outlook in immediate future. Austrian Ambassador at Constantinople, whom I saw yesterday, told me that he thought situation in Balkans had not improved in last few weeks. He had received orders from Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs to return to his post immediately after his son's marriage to-day, an extension of twenty-four hours' leave of absence being refused.

I learn that in Archduke (group undecypherable) and military circles plans for summer holiday are not being fixed, owing to uncertainty as to possible complications in Balkans, which may arise from Tripoli war.

Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs told me yesterday that King of Bulgaria had given positive assurances of his peaceful intentions, but his Excellency added peace largely depended on King's keeping his word.

I think they are somewhat nervous here as to the pressure which public opinion in Italy may exercise on Italian Government to incite them to take further active measures in Aegean Sea, which would inevitably lead to a reclosing of Dardanelles.⁽²⁾

I have indications which lead me to believe much uncertainty prevails in Ministry of Foreign Affairs as to how Russia would act in that case. If she incited Bulgaria to lodge a serious protest against closing of Straits it is feared here that it might lead to outbreak of grave complications in the Balkans.

Without wishing to imply that alarm is felt here as to the situation in Near East, I think it right to report to you my impression that a certain uneasiness exists here in spite of official optimism.

MINUTE.

So long as the war continues there must be increasing cause for anxiety.

L. M.
A. N.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [cp. O.-U A, IV, p. 208, No. 3566.]

No. 413.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 26224/26224/12/44.

(No. 161.)

Rome, D. June 16, 1912.

Sir,

R. June 20, 1912.

I have the honour to report that I asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs this afternoon whether since the recent heavy fighting in Tripoli and the severe losses of the Turco-Arab forces there has been any evidence of a tendency on the part of the Arabs to accept defeat. His Excellency replied that he could not honestly say there had been hitherto, and under present circumstances it was perhaps hardly to be expected. Between the Italians and the Arabs there was a Turkish screen which rendered communications with the tribes impossible, and any Arabs who displayed

⁽¹⁾ A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

a readiness to submit or a reluctance to obey the orders of the Turkish officers were summarily dealt with.

I then asked whether any indications had come to his knowledge of an intention to proceed further in the direction of a conference, or whether any further advances had been made with a view to mediation. The Marquis di San Giuliano replied that, so far as he was aware, all was at present in suspense. He had, he said, some hopes that the arrival of Baron Marschall in London would lead to an exchange of views between Great Britain and Germany and prepare the way for some action which would have a much greater chance of general acceptance if it was shown that the two Governments, whose rivalry the Turkish Government had always counted upon, were in agreement. He did not himself, he added, feel so sure that the Italian and Turkish attitudes were as irreconcilable as they were supposed to be.

From other observations made by His Excellency and from conversations which I have had with other high officials at the Italian Foreign Office I think that the idea which he has in mind is not that the two Governments would be likely to contemplate exercising any pressure on Turkey to come to terms but rather a hope that they might see their way to using identical language at Constantinople in a very friendly spirit to persuade the Turkish Government that, in the real interests of Turkey, it was desirable that she should recognise the inevitable and not still further prejudice a situation which she could not hope to improve. There are signs that the financial interests which have hitherto upheld the Turkish cause are beginning to have misgivings, and the campaign against Italy in certain journals is rather changing its tone for counsels of moderation. A solution may perhaps be found in the readiness of Italy to recognise the religious supremacy which either belligerent may interpret in the manner which its own "amour-propre" dictates, Italy as not affecting the sovereignty which she has proclaimed, and Turkey as implying a sovereignty which she considers inseparable from the idea of religious supremacy.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

MINUTES.

We must maintain our point of view that any mediation must be the work of all the 5 Powers. The "advice" to be given at Constantinople would be difficult to distinguish from "friendly pressure"—and we must bear in mind that our Moslem subjects in India are watching our line of policy very carefully.

A. N.

The German Ambassador in speaking of the war has confined himself to strong censure of the Italian decree of annexation. I do not suppose this is the identical language in which the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs wishes us to join at Constantinople.

E. G.

No. 414.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

St. Petersburg, June 17, 1912.

F.O. 25914/24531/12/44.

D. 8.40 P.M.

Tel. (No. 217.)

R. 10.55 P.M.

Your telegram No. 502 June 10.⁽²⁾

Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs spoke to me to-day regarding French Minister for Foreign Affairs' proposal.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced, as the contents are given in more detail in Sir E. Grey's despatch, No. 205. v. *supra*, p. 399, No. 411.]

He greatly resents the suggestion made by French Government that the three Powers should sign a protocol of disinterestedness, which suggestion he says can only be directed against Russia. He complains that French Government persist in attributing to Russia designs—which she does not entertain—of obtaining advantages for herself out of Turkey's difficulties. These suspicions he ascribes largely to the influence of M. Louis, whose presence here renders negotiations difficult.

He entirely agrees with you that mediatory action must be by the five Powers in common, and he said that if the German Minister for Foreign Affairs approached him at the forthcoming meeting of the Emperors with a proposal for mediation he would reply that the matter could only be discussed in common by the five Powers.

He has strong objections to idea of a conference, which, he says, is desired only by the French Government. He thinks that if a conference once met it would be impossible to exclude from its purview questions such as the commercial (as distinct from the military) status of Dardanelles, Crete, the position of Ægean islands, Macedonia, &c. To refuse to consider the three latter questions might give rise to risings and disturbances.

He is unable, with the best will possible, to discover any grounds for supposing that present moment is particularly favourable for mediation, the less so as the last Italian successes appear to have been of importance. He seems to think it likely that Italy will occupy Chios, but gave me to understand that he had good reason to know that she would not attack Mitylene or Lemnos.

MINUTE.

M. Cambon presented me with the formula today. I have recorded the discussions in a telegram to Sir F. Bertie.⁽³⁾

E. G.

(³) [*v. immediately succeeding document.*]

No. 415.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 26254/24531/12/44.

(No. 303.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 17, 1912.

M. Cambon spoke to me this afternoon of the formula which M. Poincaré had suggested, and which we had received this morning.⁽²⁾

I said that it was, with one or two verbal alterations, the same as I had proposed last week, and we would agree to it.

M. Cambon asked whether there should be an exchange of notes.

I replied that I thought there should be as little formality as possible. I would suggest that M. Poincaré should communicate the formula to us, and that we should reply that it represented our views. M. Poincaré might communicate the formula in the same way to St. Petersburg.

[I am, &c.]

E. G.[REY].

(¹) [This despatch was sent to the King and circulated to the Cabinet with a copy of the formula mentioned.]

(²) [*v. infra*, p. 404, No. 418.]

No. 416.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 26925/24531/12/44.

Tel. (No. 254.)

Foreign Office, June 18, 1912.

M. Cambon communicated to me to-day the formula of M. Poincaré about the Italian-Turkish war.⁽²⁾ I replied as I had promised that it expressed our views. M. Cambon said it was desired to publish it; I said the question of publication required consideration. I then told M. Cambon that I had just heard that Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] resented suggestion that three Powers should sign a protocol of disinterestedness, and regarded it as directed against Russia [Mr.] O'Beirne's tel[egram] No. 217.⁽³⁾ I said that this was the objection I had expressed originally, but on hearing that Russian Ambassador at Paris had put the objection on one side when it was discussed with him I had not wished to be more Russian than the Russians and had therefore said no more about it. But now the French Gov[ernmen]t ought to know of it without delay. M. Cambon said he would inform French M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] at once. I observed that the last form of the proposal was disinterestedness by all five Powers and not by three only. I also said that Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] had made these remarks entirely on his own initiative: we had not raised any of these questions about the formula with him.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 515)]

⁽²⁾ [v. *infra*, p. 404, No. 418.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 401-2, No. 414.]

No. 417.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 25914/24531/12/44.

Tel. (No. 516.)

*Foreign Office, June 18, 1912.*Your telegram No. 217.⁽²⁾

My telegram No. 254⁽³⁾ to Sir F. Bertie repeated to you will enable you to explain to M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] what has occurred. I objected to sentence about disinterestedness in original draft for the reason that Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] now gives, but hearing that Russian Ambassador at Paris did not object, I had no reason for objecting to final form of formula now proposed. My views on general question are same as those expressed by Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs].

(Confidential.)

I think language of M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs], as reported in third paragraph of your telegram, might if repeated by him emphatically to French Gov[ernmen]t, put an end to their anxiety for any formula.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 401-2, No. 414.]

⁽³⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 418.

M. Paul Cambon to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 26152/24531/12/44.

Ambassade de France, Londres,

Monsieur le Secrétaire d'État

le 18 juin, 1912.

Pour faire suite à la conversation que nous avons eue hier, j'ai l'honneur de proposer à Votre Excellence d'ordre de M. Poincaré le formule suivante de déclaration :

“ Les Gouvernements français, russe et britannique ayant les mêmes vues sur les conditions dans lesquelles ils pourront, en temps opportun, coopérer avec efficacité au rétablissement de la paix entre l'Italie et la Turquie, estiment qu'une intervention amicale des Puissances n'aurait chance de succès que si l'objet en est strictement limité aux termes précis du litige qui a motivé le conflit. Les Puissance[s] médiatrices devraient donc, avant toute délibération, souscrire un pacte général de désintéressement. Les trois Gouvernements s'accordent à reconnaître que, pour arriver à leurs fins pacifiques, il est essentiel que les cinq Puissances se concertent avant toute démarche.”

Pour répondre au désir que m'exprime M. Poincaré, je serais très-reconnaissant à Votre Excellence de me faire connaître, dès qu'il lui sera possible, si elle donne son assentiment à la formule qui précède.

Veuillez, &c.

PAUL CAMBON.

MINUTE.

No reply—as I think the French Gov[ernmen]t are likely to withdraw all formulas.

A. N.
E. G.

(¹) [*cp supra*, p. 402, No. 415.]

No. 419.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*St. Petersburg, June 20, 1912.*

F.O. 26334/24531/12/44.

D. 8 P.M.

Tel. (No. 219.)

R. 9.15 P.M.

Your telegram No. 516 June 18.⁽²⁾

I gave explanations which you had authorised to Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day.

He showed me the reply which he had returned to French Minister for Foreign Affairs' latest proposal, maintaining his objections to formula of disinterestedness. He observed that at the moment when a Servian delegation had arrived at St. Petersburg to present to the Emperor their secret treaty with Bulgaria it would produce disastrous impression on the Balkan Slavs were Russia to sign declaration which would be interpreted as abdication of her historic rôle in the Balkans. Declaration was uncalled for, it would not remove difficulties in the way of mediation, and it would not be acceded to by the two Central Powers. As proof of Russia's disinterested intentions, he stated that he had formally requested Turkish Ambassador

(¹) [Copies of this despatch were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 403, No. 417.]

to inform Porte that, should conference take place, Russia would do nothing to add to Turkey's difficulties, and would not raise question of Dardanelles.

His Excellency remarked that it was plain that the French Government's motive in putting forward present proposal was apprehension as to what would happen at the forthcoming meeting of the Emperors. I asked whether he had given French Ambassador assurance given in third paragraph of my telegram No. 217.⁽³⁾ He replied in the affirmative, but complained that it was impossible to dispel French suspicions, and added that French Ambassador could not understand true position of affairs between Russia and Germany. He could not realise, for instance, that the new naval project was directed solely against Germany. Minister for Foreign Affairs remarked that forthcoming meeting of the Emperors would be the sixth. What change had previous meetings produced?

His Excellency begged that you would assist in making his position clear to the French Government. He said that he would willingly fall in with any suggestion from the French Government that was not "playing with fire," but his objections to proposed declaration of distinterestedness seem to be insurmountable.

MINUTES.

I took the opportunity to-day (June 21) of a visit from M. Cambon to say that I gathered that M. Sazonow was becoming a little nettled by the French Gov[ernmen]t not appearing to have complete confidence in him, and I thought it would be wise for the French Gov[ernmen]t to be quite satisfied with the assurances which M. Sazonow had given, and not worry him to sign formulas etc. It was clear that he was much opposed to any "protocole de désintéressement," and it would, therefore, be far wiser to drop it. M. Cambon said he quite agreed with me. I told him I was not charged to speak with him on the subject, but I knew M. Sazonow very well—and feared he might become really annoyed if he were too much pressed. This would be unfortunate on the eve of the Emperors' meeting. M. Cambon said he would write to M. Poincaré.

The declaration must now be dropped.

A. N.

E. G.

(³) [*v. supra*, p. 402, No. 414.]

No. 420.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.

F.O. 24985/24985/12/44.
(No. 183.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 20, 1912.

With ref[erence] to my desp[atch] No. 124 of June 5,⁽¹⁾ I have to inform you that the Turkish Ambassador called at this Office on June 10 and said that M. Sazonow had told the Turkish Amb[assador] at St. Petersburg that the Italians would certainly not occupy Lemnos and Imbros, and w[oul]d probably not occupy Mitylene and Chios for the present. Tewfik Pasha said that this did not satisfy the Porte, as Mitylene was close to the entrance to the Straits. Tewfik Pasha then referred to the suggestion that he had conveyed from Assim Bey, to the effect that Italy should assure the neutral Powers that she would not try to force the Dardanelles, and that the neutral Powers c[oul]d then inform the Porte.

In this connection I w[oul]d refer Y[our] E[xc]cellency to the statement of the Italian Ambassador contained in the last para[graph] of my above-mentioned desp[atch]. You sh[oul]d say unofficially to the Italian M[in]ister for F[ore]ign A[ffairs] that it is understood that other Powers have mentioned the question of

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 395-6, No. 407.]

further operations in the Ægean and that such an assurance as that mentioned by the Marquis Imperiali w[oul]d be very valuable and a great relief to neutral Powers in the event of the Italians moving to Mitylene.

(Confidential.)

My information is that both Germany and Austria have deprecated either at Rome or to the Italian Ambassadors at Berlin and Vienna, the occupation of Mitylene at all.⁽²⁾

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽²⁾ [The last paragraph was added in Sir Edward Grey's own hand, with a marginal note: "Make sure that this is correct" He had also altered the wording of the first part of the previous sentence, inserting "saw unofficially" instead of "inform" and adding the words "that it is understood Ægean"]

No. 421.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 25458/24531/12/44.

(No. 304.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 20, 1912.

The French Ambassador informed Sir A. Nicolson on June 11 that the French M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] in a telegram received that morning, maintained his wish for Russia, France and G[rea]t Britain to subscribe to an understanding of the nature described in his former telegram.⁽¹⁾ M. Poincaré added that M. Isvolsky had stated that he considered that his Gov[ernmen]t would be ready to join in such an understanding, as he understood that the "pacte de désintéressement" would only apply to the present war and would not affect the question of the Straits which would probably arise in a near future. M. Poincaré was also of opinion that Italy would not view with disfavour such an understanding between the 3 Powers.

Sir A. Nicolson pointed out to M. Cambon that M. Poincaré had not really met my objections which were chiefly directed to a grouping of Powers on a question of general European interest.⁽²⁾

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 395, No. 406.]

⁽²⁾ [The above document was based upon a minute by Sir A. Nicolson written on June 11, 1912. The minute is virtually identical in wording with the despatch, except for the addition of the following paragraph:—

"I would, however, refer the matter to you—As M. Poincaré has informed the Russian Gov[ernmen]t of his "formula," we might perhaps ask St. Petersburg & Paris whether they would be disposed to come to an understanding that in the questions of mediation or of proposals to terminate the war no-one of them would take separate action or join separate combinations but would undertake to promote the combined co-operation of all the Great Powers in furtherance of the interest of peace? This would be, I think, a sufficient security against the dangers which M. Poincaré somewhat unduly fears, and would not be constituting groups but on the contrary would be in favour of a concert"

Sir Edward Grey annotated the minute:—

"A very good suggestion. E. G."]

No. 422.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾*St Petersburg, June 21, 1912.*

F.O. 26458/24531/12/44.

D. 3.25 P.M.

Tel. (No. 220.)

R. 4.35 P.M.

My immediately preceding tel[egram] June 20.⁽²⁾

French Ambassador informs me that his present instructions are to ask Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] to accept French M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffair]s' formula, including words "pacte [?] général de désintéressement" and if Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] refuses, to ask him to propose another formula.

It is evident that use of French word désintéressement might seem to imply more than a mere declaration on Russia's part that she was seeking no safeguards for herself. It might be construed to mean that she ceased to interest herself in Balkan affairs. Possibly M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] might subscribe to a formula which could not give rise to any such interpretation.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 238). Copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 404-5, No 419.]

No. 423.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾*St. Petersburg, June 22, 1912.*

F.O. 26602/24531/12/44.

D. 7.55 P.M.

Tel. (No. 222.)

R. 8.30 P.M.

My telegram No. 220.⁽²⁾

French Ambassador informs me that he has seen the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and that the latter maintains his objections to the term "désintéressement," and also would not agree to a form of words stating that mediatory Powers sought no advantages for themselves. Minister for Foreign Affairs would, however, agree to a phrase stating that Powers had in view "the general interests of Europe."

French Ambassador said that French Minister for Foreign Affairs did not seem inclined to insist on publication of proposed declaration, and he thought that this fact would render it easier to come to terms with the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs as to its wording.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Eduard Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 27671/4/12/44.

(No. 191.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. June 23, 1912.

R. July 1, 1912.

At a conversation which I had with Monsieur Sazonow on the 17th instant His Excellency referred to Monsieur Poincaré's proposals for a declaration by the Powers regarding the principles which would guide them in mediating between Italy and Turkey. He expressed considerable resentment at the suggestion that the Three Powers should sign a declaration of disinterestedness. It was evident he said that such a suggestion could only be directed against Russia. The French Government persisted in believing that he wished to profit by Turkey's difficulties in order to obtain some advantage for Russia and nothing he could say availed to disabuse their minds of this idea. He attributed the French suspicions largely to the influence of Monsieur Georges Louis, whose presence here put him, Monsieur Sazonow, in a most embarrassing situation personally, and greatly increased the difficulties of the negotiations.

The Minister went on to say that he entirely concurred in the views which you had expressed to Count Benckendorff as to the necessity of any mediatory action being taken by the five Powers in common, and not separately by the group of three Powers.

He added that if at the forthcoming meeting of the Emperors any proposals were made by Germany regarding mediation he would reply that that was a subject which could only be discussed by the five Powers in common.

Monsieur Sazonow having shown me a telegram from Monsieur Iswolsky from which it appeared that Monsieur Iswolsky had himself expressed concurrence in Monsieur Poincaré's suggested declaration of disinterestedness, I called the Minister's attention to what the Russian Ambassador had said. He replied in a good-humoured way that Monsieur Iswolsky was just now particularly anxious to fall in with the wishes of the French Government but that he had not expressed the views of the Russian Government, and that he had now been set right on that point.

On the 20th instant I had a further conversation with His Excellency. He had now heard that you had accepted Monsieur Poincaré's amended formula, and said that he was sorry that you had done so. I explained to him, as authorised by your telegram No. 516 of the 18th instant⁽²⁾ that you had at first taken exception to the proposed declaration of disinterestedness on the same grounds as himself, but that you had not insisted on your objection when you were informed by Monsieur Cambon of what Monsieur Iswolsky had said in Paris. I pointed out also that it was now contemplated that the declaration should be by all five Powers, which rather altered its significance. Monsieur Sazonow appeared satisfied with these explanations but maintained in the strongest way his objections to Monsieur Poincaré's proposed "pacte général de désintéressement." He said that for Russia to subscribe to it would be regarded as an abdication on her part of her historic rôle in the Balkans; it would produce a disastrous impression on the Balkan Slavs, more particularly coming at the present moment when Servian and Bulgarian Delegations were visiting Russia, and it would destroy all the work accomplished by Russian policy during the past two years. He objected to the declaration because it was uncalled for, because he believed that it would not be accepted by Germany and Austria, and because he could not see that it would serve to remove any of the real difficulties in the way of a successful mediation.

It was plain, His Excellency said, that in putting forward his proposal the French Government had been actuated by apprehensions as to what might take place at the forthcoming meeting of the two Emperors. Now this would be the sixth time

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Admiralty.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 408, No. 417.]

that the Emperors had met, and what change he asked, in regard to Russia's general policy had come out of the former interviews? I took the opportunity to enquire whether he had given to the French Government the assurance which as reported above, he gave to me on the 17th instant as to the reply which he would make to any German proposals with regard to mediation. He said that he had done so repeatedly, but that it was impossible to dispel French suspicions. The French Ambassador he proceeded to say, could not understand what was the real position of affairs between Germany and Russia. For instance he was unable to realize that the new Navy scheme which had just been adopted by the Duma was a measure aimed directly against Germany.

I asked His Excellency how His Majesty's Government could assist him in the present difficulty. He said that he begged that you would help in making his position clear to the French Government. He was perfectly willing to adopt any suggestion from them that was not positively dangerous—the precise expression used by His Excellency was “that was not playing with fire.”

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

No. 425.

Mr. O'Benne to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 27672/4/1912/44.

(No. 192.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. June 23, 1912.

R. July 1, 1912.

The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me on the 17th instant that he was quite satisfied, from enquiries which he had made, that the idea of summoning an international conference in connection with the Turco-Italian war had originated with the French Government, who had purposely thrown the responsibility for it on to Rifaat Pasha and Monsieur Tittoni.

Monsieur Sazonow said that nobody but the French Government desired a Conference. He himself objected to the proposal on the ground that if a Conference once met, he thought that it would be impossible to exclude from its purview such questions as the commercial status of the Dardanelles (as distinct from their status from a military point of view), the future position of the *Ægean* islands, Macedonia, Crete, &c. As regards the three latter questions, he said that the summoning of a Conference would be the signal for the populations interested putting forward their demands for a change of *régime*, and if the Powers refused to consider these claims the result might be disturbances and risings. He could not answer for what might occur in the Balkans.

On another occasion His Excellency said to me that of course if the other Powers agreed as to the necessity of a Conference Russia would not stay out of it, but he strongly objected to the idea on the grounds stated above.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

MINUTE.

M. Sazonow's views are very sound.

A. N.
E. G.

No. 426.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

F.O. 27227/24531/12/44.

(No. 216.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 24, 1912.

The Russian Ambassador told me to-day that he had just received a telegram, from which it seemed that M. Sazonoff had not yet agreed to the French formula, as M. Cambon had informed us this morning. M. Sazonoff telegraphed that he had, with the French Ambassador in St. Petersburg, drawn up the accompanying variation of the declaration. Count Benckendorff asked me whether this would meet my view.

On reading it, I said that evidently "les puissances" meant "les cinq puissances," and that the only criticism which occurred to me was that it seemed to declare that the moment for friendly intervention had come.

Count Benckendorff said that this would not be so, because the earlier part of the declaration referred to "temps opportun."

I replied that, if this were so, the Russian version would meet my view.

I said, however, that there should be no formal exchange of notes, and that nothing should be published. The thing was, in fact, just such as we might have expressed in conversation when discussing the war. If we published it, the impression would be given that there was some formal agreement between the three Powers, apart from other Powers. This would set the whole Press of Europe talking, and would defeat the very object at the end of the declaration, which was to keep the five Powers together.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

Enclosure in No. 426.

Note by Count Benckendorff.

La première partie reste sans changement.

Changé: "estiment que les Puissances n'ayant en vue que les intérêts généraux de l'Europe et guidées uniquement par l'intérêt supérieur de la paix, devraient se déclarer prêtes à une intervention amicale dont l'objet serait strictement limité aux termes précis du litige qui a motivé le conflit."

La fin reste sans changement.

No. 427.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 27367/24531/12/44.

Tel. (No. 527.)

Foreign Office, June 25, 1912, 3.40 P.M.

French Ambassador communicated yesterday a form of words respecting mediation which he said Russia had accepted. In the evening Russian Ambassador brought another version which he said Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] had drawn up with French Ambassador at St. Petersburg. Either form seems acceptable but in Russian version it would be well to insert "en temps opportun" after "se déclarer prêtes," or sentence may be construed to mean that time for immediate intervention has come.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 259).]

In any case this ought not to be regarded as a formal exchange of notes between three Gov[ernmen]ts, or to be published which would be disastrous and defeat its own object, which is to avoid separate grouping in mediation and keep all 5 Powers together. You should explain what has passed to Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs].

No. 428.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen

F.O. 27487/27487/12/44.
(No. 155.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 26, 1912.

While we were discussing the war between Italy and Turkey yesterday, the German Ambassador spoke very impressively of the disregard of international law. The Italian decree of annexation while war was proceeding was, in effect, contrary to the convention signed at The Hague Conference respecting military occupation in time of war. He said that this increasing tendency to disregard international law and violate treaties played into the hands of military parties, and led to increased expenditure.

I agreed that what had occurred in the Italian-Turkish war was not good precedent; but, whatever international law or treaty was violated by one Power, there were always some Powers who felt it to be in their interest not to object. In the case of the Italian-Turkish war, there had not been any neutral Power that was not anxious to avoid quarrelling with Italy on the point. I referred to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina as another instance of what was not good precedent.

The Ambassador said that he thought we had been quite right in demanding a Conference with regard to that annexation.

I replied that we had not actually demanded a Conference. What we had said was that we could not recognise the alteration of an international treaty until the other Powers parties to it also recognised the alteration.

The Ambassador said that, though Germany had begun the grouping of Powers in Europe, he himself did not think that the division of Powers into groups made for a comfortable state of things.

I observed that I hoped it might be realised, in the course of time, that even if there were different groups of Powers, there were not likely to be disputes between them; and so things might become more comfortable.

The Ambassador lunched with me to-day and I took the opportunity of saying that the late Count Aehrenthal⁽¹⁾ had desired to avoid a separate grouping of the Powers over the Italian-Turkish war, and before he died had recognised that this opinion had been most sympathetically received by me. I added that ever since in all conversations on this subject with French or Russian Ambassadors or any Ambassadors I had advocated that all the five Powers should keep together and not fall into separate groups.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [Count von Aehrenthal died on February 17, 1912. Count Berchtold became Minister for Foreign Affairs on February 19.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.

F.O. 28231/28231/12/44.

(No. 148.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 28, 1912.

The Italian Ambassador told me to-day that reports were being put about which he was sure were false, but of which he had made a list, and would tell me. They were:

(1). That we had assured the Turks that they need not be anxious about the *Ægean Islands*, as these would revert to Turkey unchanged after the war.

I said that this was absolutely untrue. We had not said anything to the Turkish Government about the Islands. All I had done was to observe, in conversation with some of the Ambassadors of other Powers, that the settlement of the question of the Islands at the end of the war would present difficulties.

In this the Italian Ambassador agreed.

(2). That Lord Kitchener was contemplating the occupation of the harbour of Bardia: a harbour which, I gathered, is beyond the Sollum boundary of Egypt.

I said that there was not a word of truth in our contemplating a move beyond the boundary of Sollum, as suggested in the rumour and that I had never before heard even the name of Bardia.

(3). That Great Britain had approached the Powers with a view to the recognition of the annexation of Tripoli by Italy, under the religious supremacy of the Sultan, Cyrenaica to remain under Ottoman rule, with other details of the same sort. The Ambassador gave me an extract from the "*Daily Chronicle*" to this effect.

I said that we had not made any proposal whatever about Cyrenaica. With regard to the religious supremacy of the Sultan, the only possible foundation for the rumour would be what I had said to Count Benckendorff about a possible annual payment to the Sheikh-ul-Islam⁽¹⁾: a suggestion which I had made in concert with the Italian Ambassador, and of which I had told him at the time. The Ambassador said of course he knew all about this.

(4). That Baron Marschall had begun negotiations with us to settle the questions of the Bagdad Railway and the harbour of Alexandretta as Germany desired, we in return to receive the annexation of Cyrenaica to Egypt.

I said that I had never discussed Cyrenaica with Baron Marschall, nor coupled the question of the Bagdad Railway, or any other question in Asia Minor, with the Italian-Turkish war in any way; and he had not made any such proposal to me. Our discussion of the war had really been limited to an agreement that the Italian decree of annexation was a great obstacle to peace.

The Italian Ambassador had, I found, already had conversation with Baron Marschall, and was aware of the strength of his language about the Italian decree of annexation.

(5). That the French and British Governments had assured the Grand Vizier that they would under no circumstances recognise the Italian annexation of Tripoli.

I said that nothing of this sort had been said by us to the Grand Vizier.

(6). That the stopping of contraband on the Egyptian frontier being very expensive, Lord Kitchener intended to give more freedom for the passage of officers and arms.

I said that no change whatever had been suggested by Lord Kitchener, or by us to him; he had not even mentioned the inconvenience of expense. It was true that the Khedive, in conversation with me the other day, had mentioned the expense of maintaining extra police on the frontier as an instance of the inconvenience of the war to Egypt. I had admitted the inconvenience, but had pointed out that, altogether apart from our occupation, neutrality was the only policy for Egypt, as the Turkish Fleet could not protect it from being attacked by Italy, and that therefore the

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 394, *Ed. note.*]

obligations of neutrality must be preserved. On the quite new point as to the prohibition of money passing through Egypt, it did seem to me, after studying the documents, that to treat money as contraband would be to go beyond the international Treaty obligations of neutrality.

The Ambassador argued that, as money was of very great importance, it was inconsistent with the spirit of the Treaty obligations to allow it to pass.

I said that I could not admit that money was contraband. I added that the obligations of neutrality had been interpreted at least as strictly in Egypt as in Tunis or elsewhere.

To this the Ambassador assented.

I explained that to go beyond Treaty obligations would be to cease to be neutral.

The Italian Ambassador expressed explicit confidence in what I had said, and he repeated that he had been sure from the first that none of these rumours were true. But he thought that some very malign agency was at work in spreading them, and he was anxious that I should take some opportunity of contradicting some of them publicly, especially numbers (1) and (3).

I said that never in the whole course of my experience had I met with rumours more absolutely without foundation than these, and never before had I had anything like the same number of false reports presented to me in one day.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 430.

Admiralty to Foreign Office.

F.O. 27923/16312/12/44.

Confidential.

Admiralty, (M.01056.) June 29, 1912.

Sir,

R. July 1, 1912.

I have laid before my Lord Commissioners of the Admiralty your letter of the 18th June (No. 23344) ⁽¹⁾ on the subject of the occupation by Italy of certain Turkish Islands in the Ægean Sea.

2.—In order to elucidate the question of the possible effect strategically on British interests of the permanent retention by Italy of any of the occupied Islands a Memorandum has been prepared by the Chief of the Staff which sets forth the general issues involved.

3.—My Lords agree with the conclusion arrived at that the maintenance of the status quo ante should be aimed at and that H[is] M[ajesty's] Government should endeavour to associate the Powers who are co-signatories of the Treaties governing the free navigation of the Dardanelles in protesting against any permanent occupation of the islands by Italy or any other of the principal Naval Powers.

I am, &c.

O. MURRAY.

Enclosure in No. 430.⁽²⁾

Italian Occupation of Ægean Islands and its Effect on Naval Policy.

Secret.

1. Admiralty policy in the Mediterranean has for many years been based upon the condition that our interests in the eastern basin of that sea (viz., the Black Sea

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It asked for the views of the Admiralty "as to whether it is consistent with British strategic interests that Italy sh[oul]d be allowed to retain permanently any island or islands in the Ægean, or whether it sh[oul]d be an object of British policy to secure, at the end of the war, the evacuation by Italy of all islands seized and occupied by her during the war." (F.O. 23344/16312/12/44.)]

⁽²⁾ [The text given above is from the printed copy preserved in the Foreign Office archives, as the original cannot be traced.]

and Levant trade at its source—Egypt—and the Suez Canal route to the East) could only be threatened by hostile fleets operating from countries a thousand miles distant from the vital area in which those interests lie, which fleets could be observed, and their hostile movements controlled, by our fleets based upon Malta.

A cardinal factor of this condition has naturally been that no strong Naval Power should be in effective permanent occupation of any territory or harbour east of Malta, if such harbour be capable of transformation into a fortified Naval base.

Since the battle of Navarino in 1827, the Turkish Fleet has been a negligible quantity, while the Greek Navy has been maintained upon such a small scale as not to affect this general condition.

2. The maintenance of the *status quo* in the Ægean Sea has not only been British policy for a century, but may fairly be said to represent also the policy of Europe.

It is true that in order to bring pressure upon Turkey upon some definite point of difference, a temporary occupation of some island, by various Powers acting separately or in conjunction, has at various times taken place, but a restoration to the *status quo ante* has invariably followed the settlement of the dispute, in the interests, it is assumed of all Europe.

Thus in 1887 the Austrians temporarily occupied Mersina in the Province of Adana in Asia Minor.

In 1901 the French temporarily occupied Mitylene.

In 1905 an International Squadron of Ships of Great Britain, France, Austria, Italy, and Russia occupied Lemnos and Mitylene.

The sole exception has been the British occupation of Cyprus, which was opposed by the Naval Authorities of the day, but was determined upon for Military reasons connected with India. "In taking Cyprus the movement is not Mediterranean; it is Indian." (*Lord Beaconsfield*, 1878.)

The question of Crete would never be so acute, were it not that the possession of the fine harbour of Suda by any one Power is the subject of determined opposition by all others.

We are now confronted with the possibility of Italy retaining possession of certain of the Ægean Islands in full sovereignty.

Of these islands, some are more important than others. Some have fine harbours that could with ease be made into fortified Naval bases. The importance of others is dependent upon their proximity to the Dardanelles.

But it should be understood that as a matter of principle these minor questions of convenience do not affect our policy as a whole, and it is not practical to differentiate between the islands.

None can foresee the developments of material in warfare, and the occupation of the apparently most useless island should be resisted equally with the occupation of the best.

The geographical situation of these islands enables the Sovereign Power, if enjoying the possession of a Navy, to exercise a control over the Levant and Black Sea trade and to threaten our position in Egypt in an unprecedented degree.

A permanent menace to Turkey by the Sovereign Power would also be established, or, alternatively, greater facility would be given to the transport of Turkish troops to Egypt in the event of Turkey joining our enemies.

Also the fact that the Italian Tripoli frontier now marches with that of Egypt must not be left out of consideration.

3. Such a condition of affairs would have compelled an entire reconsideration of Naval policy in the Mediterranean at a time when we maintained there a full squadron of Battleships and a squadron of Cruisers. It would have been necessary to detach sufficient ships to mask any force that might be present in the Ægean Sea or to invest the established Naval base.

But at the present day, when our whole fleet is insufficient to provide for a sure preponderance in the North Sea coincidently with an effective protection of our Mediterranean interests, the situation would plainly be aggravated by the establishment of a hostile Naval Station in the Ægean.

Egypt and the Levant are still 1,000 miles from the territory of a potential enemy.

Hostile squadrons designed to operate in those waters must still leave their bases and supports far behind them and incur all the risks attendant upon so distant a venture, risks accentuated by the ever-present possibility of our return in force following upon a decision in the North Sea.

Were, however, such squadrons able to count upon making use of adjacent fortified harbours, their risk would be much diminished and our difficulty proportionately increased.

Had Brueys, after landing the French Army in Egypt been able to take his fleet to an adjacent fortified harbour, the battle of the Nile and our consequent re-establishment in the Mediterranean might never have taken place.

From the above considerations it may be confidently asserted that the possession by Italy of Naval bases in the Ægean Sea would imperil our position in Egypt, would cause us to lose our control over our Black Sea and Levant trade at its source, and would in war expose our route to the East viâ the Suez Canal to the operations of Italy and her allies.

4. The attitude of Europe towards this question has been briefly alluded to above.

It is, however, an important factor in the matter.

A fleet making use of the harbours of any of these islands can control the exit of the Black Sea trade through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles.

It would seem to have been always tacitly assumed in Europe that the international character which by various treaties has been given to these waterways should morally be extended to those islands which, if fortified and in the possession of a Naval Power, would command this exit.

It would certainly be a legitimate claim that any transfer of sovereignty of the islands should be a subject of international consideration, if only on the grounds above mentioned, namely, that the possession of these islands by one of the Great Powers operates adversely to the freedom of the navigation of the Dardanelles by other European nations.

The two Powers principally concerned are Great Britain and Russia, and their historical attitude may be said to be fully expressed in the following quotations from despatches at the time of the San Stefano Treaty.

Lord Derby to Count Schouvaloff. May 6, 1877 :—

“The existing arrangements made under European sanction which regulate the navigation of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles appear to His Majesty’s Government wise and salutary, and there would be, in their judgment, serious objections to their alteration in any material particular.”

Reply from Prince Gortchakoff :—

“Quant aux Détroits, quoique les deux rives appartiennent au même souverain” (Turk), “ils forment le débouché exclusif de deux vastes mers où tout le monde a des intérêts. Il importe donc à la paix et à l’équilibre général que cette question soit réglée d’un commun accord sur des bases équitables et efficacement garanties.”

It is, therefore, considered that not only should we ourselves most strenuously oppose the permanent occupation of any of the Ægean islands by Italy or any other

naval Power, but we should be able to associate the co-signatories of all the treaties governing the navigation of the Dardanelles with us in our protest.

E. T. T[ROUBRIDGE].

Admiralty, June 20, 1912.

MINUTES

This Admiralty paper shows clearly how essential it is not to diminish unduly our naval strength in the Mediterranean. If the War be prolonged we do not know whether Italy may not be inclined to tighten her hold on the islands—or claim that they should be confederated into an autonomous group, which would be under Italian influence as the islands would owe their autonomy to the action of Italy. In this she would probably be backed by her allies—and the already complex problem of the Mediterranean would be still further complicated to our disadvantage. It is premature to make any decision, as we do not know what further developments the war has in store—but it is a very serious question which we must watch very carefully. I do not think the time has yet come to consult France.

A. N.

We should wait for the present.

E. G.

No. 431.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 28985/4/12/44.

(No. 162.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 4, 1912.

In the course of general conversation to-day, the German Ambassador observed that there was some idea in Constantinople that Great Britain and Germany might act together to secure a settlement of the war between Italy and Turkey. He said that it was true that two Powers could sometimes affect Turkey more than the Concert of Europe, because Turkey knew very well that, though the Concert of Europe could agree upon a form of words to be imposed upon Turkey, when Turkey broke the form the Concert never could agree upon the steps which should be taken to preserve it. But he thought that, in the case of the Italian-Turkish war, it would not be advisable that two Powers should act separately from the rest: if they did so, difficulties would be caused with the others.

I quite agreed, and said that if two Powers⁽¹⁾ were to take action which was disagreeable in Rome or Constantinople, they would merely give offence, unless they were prepared to follow up their action and enforce their advice at all costs, and they would place themselves at a disadvantage as compared with other Powers that did nothing. I held to the opinion that all the five Powers should keep in touch.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [Marginal comment by Mr Mallet: "See Mr. O'Beirne's tel[egram] No. 242 of July 7. L. M." (*v. infra*, p. 417, No. 438.)]

No. 432.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 28108/27405/12/13.

(No. 292.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 4, 1912.

The Turkish Ambassador read to Sir A. Nicolson on the 28th ult[imo] a telegram from the Turkish M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] relative to a certain movement in Greece to promote the conclusion of a settlement of the Cretan question, in a sense

favourable to the islanders' aspirations, before the meeting of the Greek Chamber in October. The tel[egram] also alluded to the effervescence in the island itself. Assim Bey trusted that the Powers would discourage these "Greek intrigues," and that the islanders would be warned to keep quiet.

Sir A. Nicolson told Tewfik Pasha that he did not conceal from H[is] H[ighness] that the Greek Gov[ernment] were uneasy as to what might occur in October next, and that he thought all allowances should be made for the exceedingly difficult position of M. Venizelos who had acted with firmness and determination on the occasion of the opening of the Greek Chamber. As to the islanders, the Powers were continually warning them to keep quiet, and had let them know in very positive terms that no disturbance of the *status quo* would be permitted.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

No. 488.

M. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, July 7, 1912.

F.O. 28705/24202/12/38.

D. 5-30 p.m.

Tel. (No. 242.)

R. 10-30 p.m.

Minister for Foreign Affairs, who returned from Baltic port this morning, gave me the following information regarding what passed at the meeting:—⁽¹⁾

German Chancellor stated at the outset that the Germans had not come with the intention of asking Russians to do anything whatever. They merely wished to assure themselves, and, if possible, to *constater* in an official way, that the friendly relationship established between the two Powers at Potsdam⁽²⁾ had continued unchanged, or, better still, had improved.

No suggestion had been ventured from the German side regarding any alteration in the present grouping of the Powers. Chancellor had, on the contrary, stated that he had no wish to "put his finger into the existing constellation."

Bagdad Railway question had not been referred to.

Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs had asked whether assurances given to him at Potsdam that Germany would not support Austria-Hungary in any designs of territorial aggrandisement in the Balkans still held good, and the Chancellor had replied Germany's position in the matter was absolutely the same now as then.

As regards mediation question, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs had acquired the conviction that Germany was engaged in some separate negotiations on her own account with object of bringing Turkey and Italy to terms. Chancellor had said that there was still a hope that belligerents might agree between themselves. Minister for Foreign Affairs thought German Government had got wind of French Minister for Foreign Affairs' recent proposals, and were afraid that the result might be eventual conference in Paris, which they desired to avoid. He did not know whether Germany had any serious grounds for thinking belligerents might agree on conditions of peace.

German Emperor had treated Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs with exceptional distinction, but the only political subject His Majesty had discussed with him was the position in China. Minister for Foreign Affairs seemed in general much gratified by friendliness displayed on German side.

⁽¹⁾ [The meeting at Baltic Port took place on July 4-6, between the German Emperor, accompanied by Herr von Bethmann Hollweg, and the Czar, with whom were M. Sazonov and M. Kokovzov. *cp. G.P., XXXI, pp. 436-44.*]

⁽²⁾ [The subject of the Potsdam meeting will be treated in a later volume.]

No. 434.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr O'Beirne.

F.O. 28705/24202/1912/38.

Tel. (No. 563.)

Foreign Office, July 8, 1912, 7.10 P.M.

Your telegram No. 242.⁽¹⁾ You should thank M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] for his communication which I regard as quite satisfactory. You should tell him that new German Ambassador here has not made any proposals to us and that we are not having any separate negotiation with Germany at present except about matters affecting the interests of our respective colonies in South Africa.

I have in conversation with him shown readiness to express views frankly about matters of general interest such as the Italian-Turkish war and China Loan hoping that in this way mutual confidence may be created that we are not manœuvring against each others interests.

I have promised to inform him of result of Bagdad Railway Negotiations with Turkey as if any foreign participation south of Bagdad is arranged Germany has by agreement with Turkey a right to an equal share with that of any foreign Power.

(¹) [*v* immediately preceding document.]

No. 435.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*Posilipo, July 8, 1912.*

D. 8.17 P.M.

R. 10 P.M.

F.O. 29530/4/12/44.

Tel. (No. 79.) Very confidential.

My German colleague has received intimation that direct negotiations may be opened for peace (? between) Italy and Turkey at once, agent (group undecypherable : ? for) negotiations, as to whose personality he as yet knows nothing, will be in Rome on the 12th July.

(¹) [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 436.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 30056/4/12/44.

(No. 341.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 11, 1912.

M. Cambon observed to-day, with reference to the reports that Germany was intervening between Italy and Turkey, that such action was not consistent with the principle that the five Powers should act together. He heard that an agent was to arrive in Rome.

I said that we had heard that an agent was to go to Rome to establish direct communication between Italy and Turkey, but we did not know who the agent was. M. Sazonoff had received the impression that Germany was doing some thing in the matter.

M. Cambon remarked that M. Sazonoff should not have let pass the opportunity of pointing out to Germany that what she was doing was not consistent with joint action by the five Powers.

(¹) [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

I replied that I had not gathered that Germany had made any communication to M. Sazonoff, but only that he had received an indirect impression.

I thought that M. Sazonoff had spoken to Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg of the apprehension of disturbances in the Balkans, and had sounded him as to whether Germany would support Austria in any forward policy there and had been reassured on this point.

I also took the opportunity of observing that the Turkish Ambassador here had told us that M. Paléologue had seen the Turkish Ambassador in Paris and, though he had not formulated any proposals with regard to the war, he had said to the Ambassador that the war could not go on indefinitely, and that Turkey ought to bring it to an end.

In the course of our conversation M. Cambon said that there was no objection to direct communications between Italy and Turkey, but that the settlement would involve some points which required a conference.

I said that there were some points, such as the position of the Islands, that would require discussion between the Powers; but that need not necessarily involve a conference.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 437.

Lord Granville to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 29530/4/12/44.

(No. 393.) Confidential.

Berlin, D. July 11, 1912.

Sir,

R. July 12, 1912.

I have read in the telegram sections which reached me last night Mr. O'Beirne's telegram No. 242 of the 7th instant,⁽²⁾ in which he reports that the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs has acquired the conviction that Germany was engaged in some secret negotiations on her own account with the object of bringing Italy and Turkey to terms, and Sir Rennel[1] Rodd's telegram No. 79, Very Confidential, of the 8th,⁽³⁾ reporting that the German Ambassador at Rome has received an intimation that direct negotiations are to be opened at once through an agent who is to arrive in Rome to-morrow.

If Mr. O'Beirne's telegram had stood alone I should not have hesitated to report to you my belief that M. Sazonoff was mistaken, but Sir Rennel[1] Rodd's report seems to be such a direct confirmation of the Russian view that I am only left the choice between a further proof of the utter unreliability of statements made by the German Foreign Office and the possibility that such action as is being taken by Germany in the matter is proceeding behind the back of the acting Secretary of State of the Foreign Office. The latter alternative is, of course, by no means impossible as one has heard of such strange proceedings before in this country.

When I saw Herr Zimmermann on the 9th instant I asked him if there was anything he could tell me about the Baltic Port meeting, and especially if anything of interest had passed about the War; he replied that there had been absolutely nothing, the war had of course been discussed, but neither side had had any brilliant ('blendende') ideas to put forward, and he went on, without my giving him a lead of any sort, to express in the strongest terms the absolute necessity, if any action whatever was to be taken, of all five Powers acting together and of the avoidance of any division between the Triple Entente on the one side and Austria and Germany on the other. Of course, I heartily agreed.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 417, No. 438.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 418, No. 435.]

I may add that my Italian colleague here, with whom I am on very good terms, evidently knows nothing of these imminent negotiations, at least in so far as Germany is mixed up in them, as he asked me most anxiously on Tuesday night whether I had been able to gather from Herr Zimmermann that any conclusion had been come to or any proposals made at Baltic Port for mediation, &c.

I have, &c.
GRANVILLE.

No. 438.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.

F.O. 30455/4/12/44.

(No. 163.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 15, 1912.

The Italian Ambassador said to-day that it was clearly in the interest of Turkey to make peace. He told me that this advice had been given to the Turkish Government by every Power except ourselves. He named France, Germany, Russia, and Austria; and cited particularly M. Poincaré as having told the Italian Ambassador in Paris what he had said to the Turkish Government. The Ambassador did not ask me to promise to say anything, but he feared that our silence might be construed in Constantinople as meaning that we thought it would be unwise for Turkey to make peace. The information which he received from trustworthy sources in Constantinople was to the effect that our position there was now in the ascendant, and that our advice would carry more weight than that of any other Power.

I said that, if all the other Powers had given advice, some of them had been exceedingly quiet about it, and it must have been given very informally. There was no fear of our silence being misconstrued, and I would bear in mind what he had said, in case any opportunity should arise for promoting peace.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

No. 439.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 33465/16312/12/44.

(No. 178.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 6, 1912.

As the Italian Ambassador came to see me to-day before the holidays, I took the opportunity of saying that I hoped that his Government would not pass any decree about the *Ægean* Islands or commit themselves about them: for any great European maritime Power to keep one or more of these Islands, that might form a naval base, would give rise to difficulties.

The Ambassador said that he was aware that France was already sensitive on this subject, and no doubt Austria would have some feeling about it.

I added that we also were sensitive about the naval situation in the Mediterranean, as he would have observed from the recent expressions of public opinion and discussions here.

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch was repeated to Paris (No. 380) on August 12; to St. Petersburg (No. 274) on August 12, with the instructions indicated in Sir Edward Grey's minute. A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations on August 9.]

The Ambassador told me that he had no instructions on the subject, and so far as he was aware it had not been suggested in Italy that the Islands should be retained permanently, nor had his Government had any intention of the sort. They could hardly, however, give back Christian populations to Turkey without any guarantees; but he supposed that this question was one with which the other great European Powers would also concern themselves. He noticed that there was already some feeling here as to the future of the Christian populations of the Islands.

I said that there were difficulties in all directions. If a great European maritime Power kept one or more of the Islands, great difficulties would be raised; while to hand back to Turkey, without any guarantees against reprisals, the Christian populations of the Islands would also raise difficulties. On the other hand, the prospect of creating a number of new Cretes was not very agreeable. I repeated, however, that I hoped the Italian Government would not pass any Decree about the Islands, or commit themselves in any way with regard to them.

The Ambassador promised to let his Government know what I had said.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE.

The King.
Cabinet.

It should also go to Paris and St. Petersburg with instructions to inform French and Russian M[inisters for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] verbally of what I have said.

E. G.

No. 440.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Dering.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 36685/4/12/44.

(No. 207.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 31, 1912.

I took an opportunity of thanking the Italian Ambassador for having informed us of the resumption of negotiations in connection with the war between Italy and Turkey.

He impressed upon me that Italy was ready to meet Turkey half-way in everything except sovereignty. It would be useful if this could be impressed upon the Turks. He asked me whether I had any information. I said the information that reached me was that the present Turkish Government were really anxious to end the war but their position was not strong enough to do so unless things could be made easy for them. The Ambassador repeated that on sovereignty the Italians could not give way[:]; neither the Parliament nor the country would concede anything on that point, but on everything else they would meet Turkey half-way.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 441.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 39432/16312/12/44.

(No. 460.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 17, 1912.

M. Cambon informed Sir A. Nicolson to-day that he was instructed to announce that M. Poincaré agreed to co-operate with us in giving a fresh warning to the Italian Gov[ernment] in regard to annexing any of the Ægean islands. M. Cambon added

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch was repeated to Rome (No. 222) on September 20.]

that he could not, of course, dissent from M. Poincaré's view—but, speaking privately, he was still of opinion that a joint step at Rome would cause irritation, and be unfavourably commented upon in the Italian press. He considered that the same end could be obtained, without any friction, by an opportunity being taken to mention to the Italian R[epresentative]s at Paris and London that we understood that informal negotiations for peace had been taking place, and that we presumed that the question of the Ægean islands had not been decisively treated as the future status of the islands was of European concern, while the annexation of any of them was of serious political and strategic importance to France and England. This method of procedure would be far less formal than joint action at Rome—and would not attract necessarily public attention. M. Cambon said that he would tell M. Poincaré that he had carried out his instructions, and then suggest the course which he had sketched out to Sir A. Nicolson.

I share M. Cambon's views, and, if M. Poincaré concurs, w[oul]d propose to speak in the above sense to the Italian Ambassador here.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

[ED. NOTE.—The question of the Ægean Islands was discussed by Sir Edward Grey with M. Sazonov during the latter's visit to Balmoral on September 24–5. *v. infra*, pp. 758–9, No. 808. The record of the conversation on this subject there mentioned was sent to Mr. Dering in Sir Edward Grey's telegram No. 326 of September 26, and repeated to Paris (No. 452) and St Petersburg (No. 911). (F.O. 40199/16312/12/44.)]

No. 442.

Mr. Dering to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 41532/4/12/44.

Tel. (No. 116.)

Rome, D. October 3, 1912, 11.5 P.M.

R. October 4, 1912, 11.5 A.M.

Your despatch No. 227 (of Sept[ember] 20).⁽²⁾

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] informed me to-day that there was no truth in the report of imminent conclusion of peace with Turkey. He was disappointed to find that Reshid Pasha had arrived in Switzerland apparently without fresh instructions which could bring about an agreement. On the contrary he was urging Italy to withdraw annexation decree, which she could never do.

I observed that Oriental negotiations take time to develop, and that perhaps it would be found that Reshid had something to propose later.⁽³⁾

H[is] E[xcellency] did not quite see why Reshid had been sent. He then reverted to his old argument that a word from H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would induce Turkey to make peace. To-day he went further and informed me that England was the only Great Power which had not pointed out to Turkey the advantage which she would have in concluding peace at the present juncture. He regretted that England should hold back, and was convinced that it only needed her friendly word to help Turkey to decide to come to terms.

I asked him if I was to understand that all the other Great Powers had actually told the Ottoman Gov[ernment] that in their opinion this moment was advantageous

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It recorded an interview with Marquis Imperiali in which the latter had urged the desirability of British representations at Constantinople. (F.O. 39964/4/12/44.)]

⁽³⁾ [On October 5, in despatch No. 306, Mr. Dering reported that Signor Bertolini and Reshid Pasha had left Switzerland that day for their respective countries, it was believed for the purpose of reporting progress. (F.O. 42240/4/12/44.)]

for making peace. H[is] E[xc]ellency replied he was not sure whether such representations had been made at C[on]stantino[ple] or elsewhere but it was the case that England was the only Power which had not taken a step of that kind and it was just her word which was the most important at C[on]stantino[ple] and would turn balance. I said I knew what you had told Italian Ambassador at London and that you were quite ready to do anything to promote peace or say something at C[on]stantino[ple] provided you were sure that it would be welcome there.

H[is] E[xc]ellency said that vague expression of hopes that war would soon come to an end would be of no assistance, but what was wanted was expression of opinion of H[is] M[aj]esty's G[ov]ernment that the moment was propitious for Turkey to come to terms with Italy. Ottoman Gov[ernmen]t would then have their hands free to deal with immediate danger nearer home. I told him that I would let you know what he had said.

Personally I think H[is] E[xc]ellency may have exaggerated what he thinks has been said by the other Powers. It is possible that the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t may have informed him that they have taken some such step. It is my impression that M[in]ister for F[oreign] A[ffairs] believes Ottoman Gov[ernmen]t have a grand opportunity to save their face with Turkish public opinion by signing peace with Italy and conceding annexation point on the plea of requiring their resources naval and otherwise to cope with immediate Balkan trouble.

My Austrian colleague was as usual with the M[in]ister for F[oreign] A[ffairs] when I arrived. He appeared anxious about the Balkan situation, but volunteered nothing of importance.

No. 143.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 42528/16312/12/44.

Tel. (No. 541.)

Foreign Office, October 9, 1912, 7 P M

Ægean Islands.

The French Ambassador communicated to-day a tel[egram] from M. Poincaré suggesting that, as peace w[oul]d probably shortly be made between Turkey and Italy, it w[oul]d be opportune for the Powers to say in a friendly way at Rome that they do not doubt "que l'Italie donnera, par avance, communication de tout accord qui pourrait intervenir entre le Gouvernement Italien et la Sublime Porte sur la restitution des Îles Égéennes et sur le statut politique et sur le régime administratif de l'Archipel Ottoman."

M. Poincaré thinks that the step should be taken as soon as possible and that the step should be identic and simultaneous. I understand that he is applying to all the Powers.

I will agree if the other Powers do so, as in the view of H[is] M[aj]esty's G[ov]ernment, the destiny of the Islands concerns all the Powers.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Berlin (No. 265); to Constantinople (No. 756); to Rome (No. 393); to St. Petersburg (No. 1012); to Vienna (No. 259).]

No. 444.

Lord Granville to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

Berlin, October 10, 1912.

F.O. 42554/16812/12/44.

D. 7.38 P.M.

Tel. (No. 129.) Very Confidential.

R. 9 P.M.

Your telegram No. 541 (Oct[ober] 9) to Paris.⁽²⁾

French Ambassador received similar instructions on 8th October, but telegraphed that he had discussed matter with Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, who had said he would refuse to join in such action, which would be considered unfriendly by Italy. French Ambassador added that proposal, if made to German Government, (?) would afford latter an opportunity of refusal and explanation to Italy that she had saved her from unfriendly intentions of Western Powers.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 555), to St. Petersburg (as No. 1024); to Rome (as No. 403), to Vienna (as No. 269), to Constantinople (as No. 764). Copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence, to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 445.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Paris, October 10, 1912.

F.O. 42552/16812/12/44.

D. 8.18 P.M.

Tel. (No. 162.)

R. 10 P.M.

Your telegram No. 541 of 9th October.⁽²⁾

I have informed French Minister for Foreign Affairs this evening of your willingness to make a communication to Italian Government on the subject of Ægean islands if other Powers will also do so.

Austro-Hungarian Government is unwilling to make such a communication to its Italian ally, and the German Government will probably also decline.

Minister for Foreign Affairs fears that in the terms of peace between Italy and Turkey Italy will make stipulation in favour of Greek inhabitants of islands and constitute herself as a kind of protectress of their liberties, which is a position which she ought not to arrogate to herself. He has spoken in a general way to the Italian-Ambassador to the effect that *fate of islands is a European question and not an Italo-Turkish one*. He thinks that it would be advisable for France, England, and Russia to point this out in a friendly way to the Italian Government, notwithstanding that Germany as well as Austria-Hungary may refrain from doing so.

MINUTES.

I think M. Poincaré has abandoned his first formula and now only wishes us to speak in the sense of the words underlined in this telegram. It would perhaps be better that it should be done unofficially.

As Russia will not join we had better leave the matter alone.

R. P. M.

I have recorded a conversation with M. Cambon to-day.⁽³⁾

A. N.

E. G.

11.10.12.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Rome (as No. 409); to St. Petersburg (as No. 1032); to Vienna (as No. 276); to Berlin (as No. 280); to Constantinople (as No. 776). Copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 428, No. 443.]

⁽³⁾ [v. immediately succeeding document.]

No. 446.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 43275/16312/12/44.

(No. 508.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 11, 1912.

M. Cambon told me to-day that M. Poincaré suggested a friendly enquiry by France and ourselves in Rome as to the *Ægean* Islands, with the view of impressing upon the Italian Government that the question of the Islands was one which concerned all the Great Powers. He feared that, otherwise, the Italian Government might use the terms of peace with Turkey to constitute Italy a sort of special protector of the Islands.

I said that I was reluctant that France and ourselves should do anything in Rome at this moment that would press Italy away from us towards the other Powers. A day or two now would decide whether the peace negotiations between Italy and Turkey were to succeed or break down. If they broke down, the question of the Islands was not important for the present. If they succeeded, it would be on terms which were already arranged. Italy would then make them known, and would at once press for the recognition by the Powers of her annexation of Tripoli. Indeed the Italian Ambassador had already said as much to me. I supposed that we should all recognise the annexation, and then would be the time to say to Italy that, while we recognised her annexation of Tripoli, we must all take up the question of the Islands, as it concerned the Great Powers as a whole.

M. Cambon entirely accepted this view.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this despatch were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 447.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 42764/4/12/44.

Tel. (No. 771.)

Foreign Office, October 12, 1912, 12.30 P.M.

You should unofficially express to M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] our great regret and concern at the failure of the negotiations between Italy and Turkey. I had hoped that all was going well and do not know on what point the negotiations fell through.

No. 448.

Mr. Dering to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*Rome, October 12, 1912.*

F.O. 42863/4/12/44.

Tel. (No. 125.)

D. 2.30 P.M.

R. 12.4 P.M. [sic].

There is a hitch in Italian peace negotiations with Turkey. Press announce that they may be broken off. Minister for Foreign Affairs certainly stated last night this

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

was likely. I shall ascertain the truth of this report this afternoon. I am inclined to doubt definite rupture.

It is, however, officially announced that first squadron under Admiral Viale, which is now in Italian waters, has been ordered to be in readiness to leave for the Ægean.

No. 449.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Vienna, October 12, 1912.

F.O. 42869/4/12/44.

D. 7.40 P.M.

Tel. (No. 108.)

R. 10 P.M.

Italy and Turkey.

Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs told me to-day that he had received information that a serious hitch has occurred in the peace negotiations. It turns upon a matter of form, Turkish Government asserting that they cannot authorise signature without the sanction of Parliament, which is not now sitting. Italian Government declare that further delay is impossible. Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs severely blames the attitude of the Turks in this matter.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 450.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Dering.

F.O. 43277/4/12/44.

(No. 237.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 12, 1912.

The Italian Ambassador read to me to-day a telegram which he had received to the effect that, just when the signature of a peace settlement seemed imminent, the Turkish Government had put forward new pretensions, and had withdrawn all that they had offered or accepted. In consequence, the First Italian Squadron, which was now in Italian waters, had received orders to be ready to start for the Ægean. It would be necessary for Italy to make extended operations. The Ambassador had, however, urged that as much time as possible should be allowed to give good advice a chance of prevailing in Constantinople.

I said that the action of the Turkish Government was unintelligible, except on the assumption that public excitement in Constantinople was such that the Turkish Government dared not conclude peace. If this was so, official representations or pressure in Constantinople would only make it more difficult for the Turkish Government to yield. But I told the Ambassador privately that I had, this morning, instructed Sir Gerard Lowther to say to the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs that I had hoped that peace was about to be made, and felt deep regret and concern at the failure of the negotiations.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 451.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.⁽¹⁾F.O. 43276/4/12/44.
(No. 345.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 12, 1912.

Count Benckendorff said to me to-day that the news of the rupture of the peace negotiations between Turkey and Italy caused him great anxiety, on account of the Straits. The Italians might threaten the Straits, and the Turks would then block them to commerce. A quantity of Russian grain would be held up, and Russian opinion would be very strongly moved.

I said that I was much preoccupied by the same anxiety. Interference with British trade would disturb public opinion here, and would not allow us to remain passive. I supposed that, in the first instance, we should ask the Italians for a promise not to interfere with the Straits; but it was not certain that that would be successful. I thought that we should, in one way or another, have to find some means of preventing the Straits from being closed indefinitely to shipping and commerce.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this despatch were sent to the Admiralty and to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 452.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*Constantinople, October 13, 1912.*

F.O. 42829/4/12/44.

D. 12.10 A.M.

Tel. (No. 457.)

R. 9 A.M.

Your telegram No. 771 of to-day.⁽²⁾

I have seen to-night the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and conveyed your message. He declared that he had no knowledge of the failure of the negotiations, though a long telegram from Ouchy had just arrived, and was not yet decyphered.

He explained that in the original terms, almost all concluded, there was a public and a secret treaty, but that on re-examination of the constitution it was found that where cession of territory and rights of Turkish subjects was concerned treaty must be submitted to Parliament. He had therefore proposed two treaties, one to come into force at once, and the other after being submitted to Parliament, but he did not regard the proposal as likely to wreck the negotiations, and expressed great surprise that there should be an impression that they had fallen through.

There had been some difference of views on the financial clauses, but he did not regard this as serious and expressed himself as most desirous of coming to terms.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris in print and to Rome (as No. 411).]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 425, No. 447.]

No. 453.

Mr. Dering to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Rome, October 13, 1912.

F.O. 42866/4/12/44.

D. 2.45 P.M.

Tel. (No. 129.)

R. 3.45 P.M.

My telegram No. 126 of Oct[ober] 12.⁽²⁾ Peace negotiations.

There is little doubt that unless Ottoman Government change their mind at once and agree to the terms offered by Italy some naval action in the Ægean Sea and on the Adriatic coast of Turkey may be anticipated shortly. From all I can hear it is thought likely that Italy will now occupy more islands, although I have no official confirmation of this. I need not point out the probable result of such a step. Were any remonstrances made to Italy she would reply that it has been forced upon her by Turkey's recalcitrance. The latter's altered attitude is attributed here to military influence in Constantinople. King and Queen went yesterday to Spezia to review first squadron, which is under orders to leave as soon as ready, and preparations are proceeding there with great activity.

Press news from Switzerland states that Italy has sent a final ultimatum to Turkey, to [group omitted] to-morrow or Tuesday, but from what the secretary-general told me yesterday I doubt whether any such delay will be given. He considers negotiations broken off.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Constantinople (as No. 779); to Paris (as No. 569). Copies were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It reported the growing impatience of the Italian Government with the attitude of Turkey and the probability that within a very few days the Italian fleet would proceed to the Ægean Sea and prosecute war energetically. (F.O. 42864/4/12/44.)]

No. 454.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Dering.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 48630/4/12/44.

(No. 239.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 14, 1912.

The Italian Ambassador to-day gave me to understand that, if Italy was sure of the recognition by the Powers of her sovereignty over Tripoli, it might be possible to dispense with some of the details, such as firmans, over which the negotiations between Turkey and Italy had failed; and he pressed me to promise that we would recognise Italian sovereignty.

I told him that, if Turkey, by a Treaty of Peace with Italy, withdrew her troops from Libya, we should have no political objection to recognise the full and entire sovereignty of Italy over Libya; but I must reserve the right for H[is] M[ajesty's] Government to examine how British commercial interests would be affected, and to ask for some conditions respecting them,⁽²⁾ as we had with France in the case of Tunis and Morocco.

I also said to the Ambassador that I did not see why all anxiety with regard to North Africa should not be put at rest by a mutual engagement between Italy and us to respect the "status quo" there, as established after peace was made with Turkey.

I took the opportunity to observe that, in our view, any change in the "status" of the Ægean Islands was regarded by us as a question for the Powers generally.

The Ambassador said that this would not arise in connection with the terms of peace, as Italy was going to give back the Islands to Turkey, Turkey promising to give some guarantees for privileges to the Islanders.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. infra*, p. 434, *Ed. note.*]

I observed to the Ambassador that I should be very anxious if the Straits were closed. The grain trade was most important at this time of the year, and the closing of the Straits would introduce great complications.

The Ambassador replied that he assumed that, if Italy acted at all this time, it would not be outside the Straits, but in a way to settle the question.

I asked whether he meant that Italy would force the Dardanelles and take possession of the Straits, in which case no doubt they would be open to commerce.

He replied that this was what he assumed, though he had no information.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 455.

Mr. Dering to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Rome, October 15, 1912.

F.O. 48408/4/12/44.

D. 4.45 P.M.

Tel. (No. 134.) Confidential.

R. 9.30 P.M.

My telegram No. 133 of Oct[ober] 15⁽²⁾: Peace negotiations.

Minister for Foreign Affairs confirmed to-day that public and secret treaties had been almost settled, but hitch occurred.

In secret treaty, which was to be eventually submitted to the Ottoman Parliament, Turkey was to declare autonomy for Libya with an authority who would preserve Turkey's religious rights, while Italy was to quote her annexation decree and recognise religious authority of the Sultan.

Ottoman Government now appeared to realise that in submitting this to Parliament it would be evident that they had in some measure recognised Italian annexation as it was mentioned in secret treaty. Minister for Foreign Affairs thought that this was their chief objection. Turkish Government had therefore proposed to postpone execution of stipulation in the public treaty providing for withdrawal of Turkish troops from Libya and publication of the proclamation to Arabs until secret treaty had been submitted to the Chamber.

It had been settled originally by the delegates that Turkey would withdraw from African provinces with her troops, and Italy would restore the Ægean islands and withdraw her (group omitted: ? men) from them. Italy was now, according to the latest (group undecypherable: ? proposals) of Ottoman Government, to carry out all the provisions favourable to Turkey, while Turkey (? postponed) the execution of her part of the bargain favourable to Italy until such time as the Ottoman Parliament met to discuss terms.

His Excellency pointed out the unreasonableness of the demand. Difficulty could be obviated by utilising the other articles of Turkish constitution, which the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs found would provide a loophole.

He said that there were many other points in the proposed treaty. Financial difficulties were really of little importance, and could be got over, and the Italian Government were raising no new questions. I gather that he has still some hope of hearing from Switzerland to-day favourable decision of Ottoman Government.

I need not point out what effect it would have on the Italian Government's policy if our good and friendly offices at Constantinople should bring about settlement at the eleventh hour. It is important that the Ottoman Government should realise that the negotiators will really be unavailable for further communication after midnight to-day.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Military Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced, as the information contained in it is given more fully in this telegram.]

Will of the Prime Minister rules the country, and there will be no reopening of negotiations to-morrow or the next day unless the Ottoman Government send satisfactory instructions to their delegates on the capital points. In the event of future European complications the good-will and gratitude of Italy may be worth something to us.

(Repeated to Constantinople.)

No. 456.

Lord Granville to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Berlin, October 15, 1912.

F.O. 48415/4/12/44.

D. 8.40 P.M.

Tel. (No. 182.) Secret.

R. 9.30 P.M.

Tripoli.

German Minister for Foreign Affairs told French Ambassador that there were three sets of negotiations in progress: first, those at Ouchy; second, some conducted unofficially by an Italian agent with a name something like Badana at Constantinople; and, thirdly, exchange of notes through the German Government.

German Minister for Foreign Affairs said he was convinced that neither Turks nor Italians told him the whole truth, though the German Government were supposed to be in complete confidence of both.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Director of Military Operations; to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence.]

V.—THE TREATY OF PEACE.

[*ED. NOTE.*—Peace preliminaries were signed at Ouchy on October 15 at 6 P.M. (F.O. 43409/4/12/44). The Treaty of Peace was signed at Lausanne on October 18, 1912, at 3.45 P.M. The terms of the Definitive Treaty are given in Annexe 4 of the Preliminary Treaty *v. infra*, pp. 441-2, No. 466, and *note* ⁽²⁾.]

No. 457.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.

F.O. 43408/4/12/44.

Tel. (No. 1054.)

Foreign Office, October 16, 1912, 5.45 P.M.

You may inform M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that, in answer to a question by Italian Ambassador on Monday whether if Turkish troops were withdrawn from Tripoli as a result of a Treaty of Peace between Turkey and Italy we should recognise Italian sovereignty over Tripoli I replied that we should have no political objection to doing this, but I added that any change in the future status of *Ægean Islands* was regarded by us as a question for the Powers generally.

No. 458.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr Dering.

F.O. 43822/4/12/44.

(No. 242.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 16, 1912.

The Italian Ambassador was instructed by his Government to inform me to-day of the signing of peace between Turkey and Italy, and to express their thanks for the friendly part which we had taken in bringing it about.

I expressed great satisfaction, saying that it was no doubt in Turkey's best interest, as well as in Italy's, to end the war; but in addition, from the point of view of the Concert of Europe, it was most important that not one of the Great Powers should be at war at this moment, and that Italy should have concluded this peace was a cause of the greatest satisfaction to us.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 459.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 44674/4/12/44.

(No. 878.)

Constantinople, D. October 17, 1912.

Sir,

R. October 23, 1912.

I have the honour to confirm my telegram No. 480 of the 16th instant⁽²⁾ announcing the signing of the Italo-Turkish peace protocol which virtually puts an end to the Tripoli war of over a year's duration. The terms, which, as far as is known, are substantially those set forth in Sir R. Rodd's telegram No. 134 of the 15th instant,⁽³⁾ are probably the best the Ottoman Government could have hoped for under existing circumstances, and the present Cabinet have, I think, exhibited both patriotism and wisdom in agreeing to them. It is perhaps hard that they should have to end and incur the odium of war for which the Committee régime was to a certain extent responsible, but there is no doubt that the best interests of the Ottoman Empire dictated their attitude.

The Committee, it will be remembered, declared it their policy to continue the struggle with Italy until the latter should be compelled to recognise the "full and effective sovereignty of Turkey" over the two African provinces, while the present Cabinet, when it came into office, announced its readiness to conclude peace on "terms compatible with the honour, dignity and rights of the Ottoman Government." It was fiercely attacked by the Committee for this "betrayal," and only the other day the "Tanin," the Committee organ, denounced it for wishing to accept humiliating terms of peace which could not be justified by any threatened complications in the Balkans.

His Highness Kiamil Pasha was no doubt the moving spirit in the matter of the Cabinet's determination to stop the war with Italy, his reasons being that, while it was impossible to drive Italy out of Tripoli and Cyrenaica, it was desirable to put an end to the disintegrating process occasioned by the war in the Archipelago, the Yemen and elsewhere, to relieve the stagnation of trade and regain access to the Paris market whose financial assistance was urgently required, while, in the latter stage of the negotiations, the Balkan menace was a compelling argument. Italy would certainly not have obtained peace on the same terms were it not for the action and sacrifices of the Balkan States and some of their representatives here have the feeling that Italy has left them in the lurch.

Though the loss of the two provinces, which cost Turkey over a million sterling per annum, is a financial gain, especially since the advent of the new régime with its more expensive administration, the result of the war is a severe blow to the Turkish Caliphate, and this aspect of the question was the main reason for the determined and prolonged resistance put up under disadvantageous circumstances. When Turkey, under Sultan Selim, conquered Egypt in 1517 and brought the Emblems of the Caliphate to Constantinople, she constituted herself the protector of Islam in the Near East and her thinly-disguised surrender to a Christian Power of these two Moslem

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. (F.O. 43418/4/12/44.) It reported that the Turkish delegates had signed the treaty of peace with Italy.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 429-30, No. 455. It will be noted that the telegram was actually sent by Mr. Dering.]

provinces will be regarded in the Arab and Islamic world as the pro tanto abdication of the rôle assumed by her four centuries ago. Before the war the Arabs had already been estranged from the Turks by the policy of the Committee. This feeling was to a certain extent in abeyance as long as the Turco-Arab struggle lasted, and sympathy of the Moslem Arab for Turkey in her present conflict with the Christian Balkan states will, no doubt, temporarily produce the same results, but in the long run the effect must be to lower the prestige of the de facto Turkish Caliphate in the eyes of the Arabs. Kiamil Pasha, whose name personifies the anti-Committee forces in Turkey, will be singled out for violent attacks on the subject, and as his name has also on several occasions been prominently connected with that of England, the efforts to damage him will by reflex be unfavourable to our position. Had His Highness been Grand Vizier, as was ardently desired by his partisans and also recently by the Russian Embassy here, and had England been connected with the mediation of the terms of peace, our prestige in Turkey and especially in the Arab world would have further suffered.

On the other hand, the Tripoli war has been a useful object-lesson as regards pan-Islamism, and enabled us to gauge its importance as a political force since the removal of Abdul Hamid and the advent of the new régime in Turkey. At the outset of the war there were violent manifestations of pan-Islamic feeling in the press, &c., but this feeling did not translate itself into acts, beyond sending pecuniary assistance to the Moslem Arabs in Tripoli and Cyrenaica, and one may perhaps legitimately conclude that estimates of the politic force of pan-Islamism founded on its workings during the reign of the ex-Sultan are exaggerated, now that the driving force at the Caliphate centre has been weakened.

The main provisions of the treaty of peace are that Turkey shall by proclamation grant a wide autonomy to the inhabitants of the two provinces and order the withdrawal of her regular forces there and appoint a high official to look after the Vacouf and other local Islamic interests, while Italy shall recognise the spiritual prerogatives of the Sultan-Caliph, evacuate the Ægean islands, and pay an annuity to Turkey to cover the share of the provinces to the Ottoman Public Debt, &c., &c.

The official to represent the Caliph in Tripoli, is, I learn, Shemseddin Bey, former Assistant Under-Secretary at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, then Vali of Van, subsequently Minister of Evkaf and for some years Ottoman Ambassador at Tehran towards the close of the reign of Abdul Hamid. He is noted for his deeply religious, if not mystic, disposition, and his task at Tehran under the ex-Sultan was to work for a rapprochement between the Shiah and Sunni sects of Islam. He is likely to maintain smoothe [*sic*] relations with the Senoussi. As stated in my telegram No. 481⁽⁴⁾ Italy is not to evacuate the Ægean Islands forthwith, the Porte's idea being that Italy should thus prevent Greece occupying them during the impending conflict.

As regards the disguised indemnity, (stated to be 2,000,000*l.* in annual instalments of 50,000*l.*) to be paid by Italy, it would appear that Turkey preferred an annuity to a lump sum down, as proposed by Italy, the idea of the Porte being to avoid giving a handle to the opponents of peace to attack it for having "sold" the two Islamic provinces.

Kiamil Pasha's opponents are constantly accusing him of having given away Eastern Roumelia in 1886 and of having traitorously sold that province and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908. The present arrangement will also, doubtless, be interpreted to and by Moslems as a tribute paid by Italy to Turkey. I learn that the Ottoman Government has already arranged with a financial syndicate to make a loan which will bring £T. 6,000,000 net into the Ottoman Treasury.

As regards the sanction of the Treaty by the Ottoman Chamber, it would appear that the elections are to be postponed owing to the Balkan conflict, and when the Chamber does meet, the terms are certain to be vehemently opposed by the Committee representatives, especially if the present or another non-Committee Cabinet is then in office.

(4) [Not reproduced. It mentioned the conditions of peace. (F O. 43550/4/12/44.)]

Resumption of diplomatic relations between Italy and Turkey will undoubtedly strengthen the position of the Triple Alliance in this Capital. During the war between their ally and Turkey, Austria and especially Germany have been at a disadvantage. There are indications that after peace Italy will endeavour to obliterate Turkish soreness at her seizure of Tripoli by displaying extra warmth in championing real or apparent Ottoman interests. In the past, one of the weak points in the position of the Triple Alliance here was the suspicion as to Italy's designs on Tripoli, and, when Turkish ill-feeling in the matter shall have worn off, that position will be correspondingly strengthened.

As Turkey does not appear to have unequivocally admitted Italian sovereignty over the two African provinces, the Capitulatory rights of other foreign Powers would seem not to have been ipso facto abrogated, and I presume that any changes in British Consular Representation at Tripoli and Benghazi would in a measure be dependent on the ultimate arrangements with the Italian Government in the matter.

So far the Turkish press has refrained from detailed comment on the terms of peace. This may be accounted for by the existence of Martial Law and the strict censorship of the Press.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

P.S.—I have the honour to enclose translation of the Sultan's proclamation of autonomy to the Tripoli Arabs.⁽¹⁾ It will be noticed that Shemseddin Bey is styled "Naib-es-Sultan" i.e., representative of the *Sultan* (not *Caliph*), and that he is entrusted with the safeguarding of local *Ottoman* (not *Islamic*) interests, while his emoluments are to be paid out of local revenues, i.e., presumably by the Italians.

The Cadi will receive his pay from Constantinople as in the case of the Cadi of Egypt.

The terms of this proclamation or Imperial Rescript have been embodied in a short law to be provisionally applied and subsequently submitted to the Ottoman Parliament.

G. L.

MINUTE.

I think that it would be misjudging the case if we were to assume that Pan-Islamism is a weakening force—it could not, owing to Egyptian neutrality and loss of the sea routes, do more than send pecuniary aid to Tripoli—and Senoussi's attitude cannot be taken as a criterion of general Moslem feeling. However the question is too wide a one to discuss in a minute.

A. N.
E. G.

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 460.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Rome, October 18, 1912.

F.O. 43898/4/12/44.

Tel. (No. 138.)

D. 4.30 P.M.

R. 5.15 P.M.

Austria-Hungary, Germany and Russia have already, without waiting for notification of signature of conditions, signified without any reservation their recognition of Italian sovereignty over Libya.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Rome, October 18, 1912.

F.O. 43918/4/12/44.

D. 9.15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 140.)

R. 10.30 P.M.

My immediately preceding telegram.⁽²⁾

Minister for Foreign Affairs has asked me to convey to you his cordial thanks for action taken at Constantinople, which he considers contributed efficaciously to bring about desired result.

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this telegram were sent to the Admiralty; to the Director of Naval Intelligence; to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Sir R. Rodd's telegram No. 139, of October 18, 1912, D. 10.8 P.M., R. 11.5 P.M., stated that peace had been signed at Ouchy at 3.45 P.M. (F.O. 43917/4/12/44.)]

[*ED NOTE*—At a time too late for their insertion in full a number of papers have been discovered by the Editors indicating that the British recognition of the Italian annexation of Tripoli produced a discussion of some importance on the Italian acquiescence in a possible alteration of the British status in Egypt. On October 18, the question of the nature of the conditions to which Sir Edward Grey had referred in connection with the recognition of Italian sovereignty (*cp. supra*, pp. 428-9, No. 454, and *infra*, p. 437, No. 465; pp. 443-4, No. 467, and *encl.*) was raised both by the Marquis di San Giuliano with Sir R. Rodd and Marquis Imperiali with Sir Edward Grey. (F.O. 43932/4/12/44 and F.O. 44334/4/12/44.) The following minutes were written upon the first of these papers.—

MINUTES.

I presume that we of course do not mean to attach publicly to our recognition a stipulation resp[ectin]g the Capitulations in Egypt.

(I don't think in practice that, as a matter of fact, this attitude would be really tenable; so we lose nothing by the assurance.)

I think we should instruct Sir R. Rodd *by desp[atch]* so to inform the Italian Government. But I think this is the favourable moment to send Sir R. Rodd simultaneously a copy of the desp[atch] and its enclosures that we have already sent to Paris. H[is] E[xcellency] should tell the Italian Gov[ernmen]t that we don't make the acceptance of these articles a *sine qua non* of our recognition, and that these articles are susceptible of modification, but that we do expect, and desire an assurance on the subject, that the Italian Gov[ernmen]t will show its friendliness by supporting us in the scheme of which these articles are the outline. This seems a fair and moderate way of putting it.

The ground has been already prepared for this step.

If this proposed action be approved, we might send copies of this telegram and our reply to Paris and Cairo.

R. G. V.
Oct. 19.

We must also keep in mind the "open door."

Mention might be made of this in the proposed despatch to Sir R. Rodd.

I do not understand that we are contemplating making the "capitulation" question in any way a condition of our recognition. The question of recognition will be discussed between the Prime Min[ister] and the Sec[retar]y of State, and presumably on Monday a tel[egram] will be sent to Sir R. Rodd defining our attitude in all details.

A. N.

Bring up again on Monday.

E. G.
19.10.12.

On October 22, Sir Edward Grey informed the Marquis Imperiali that he had spoken to the Prime Minister, and that "if no other nation was making special stipulations for its commerce, we ourselves could not well demand them." He was assured that complete equality of treatment as regards other nations would be granted and that "when other nations agreed to a modification or abolition of the Capitulations to Egypt the Italian Government would be quite ready to do so." (F.O. 44854/4/12/44.) *cp. infra*, p. 437, No. 465.]

Sir Edward Grey to the Marquis Imperial.

F.O. 44575/4/12/44.

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 25, 1912.

I have the hon[our] to ack[nnowledge] receipt of Y[our] E[xc]cellency's note of Oct[ober] 19,⁽¹⁾ informing me, by direction of your Gov[ernmen]t, of the cessation of the state of war between Italy and Turkey in consequence of the conclusion of a treaty of peace signed at Lausanne on Oct[ober] 18⁽²⁾ by the plenipotentiaries of the two States, and of the undertaking on the part of the Ottoman Gov[ernmen]t to withdraw their troops from Tripoli and Cyrenaica.

In accordance, therefore, with the request expressed by Y[our] E[xc]cellency in the name of your Gov[ernmen]t, I have the hon[our] to inform you that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] recognise the sovereignty of Italy over the territories in question.

[I have, &c.]

F. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It requested the recognition of Italian sovereignty over Tripoli and Cyrenaica, the terms being, *mutatis mutandis*, practically identical with those of Sir Edward Grey's reply. (F.O. 44575/4/12/44.)]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. infra*, pp. 438-42, No. 466, and *encl*]

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 46352/4/12/44.

(No. 334.) Very Confidential.

Rome, D. October 27, 1912.

Sir,

R. November 2, 1912.

As I have had the honour to report to you by telegraph,⁽²⁾ it was announced here on the 19th instant that France had agreed to recognise the Sovereignty of Italy over Tripoli and Cyrenaica. The French Ambassador told me in strict confidence that he had passed through several days of acute anxiety, and that he greatly regretted the inevitable injury to French interests which the delay had occasioned by its effect on public opinion here. It was of no use to put forward the plea, as the French press had done, that France had so long ago agreed to the Italian reversion of Tripoli, that it was unnecessary for her to compete for the goodwill of this country by outbidding other Powers in the rapidity of her public recognition. The fact remained patent to the average man that France had been behind all the other Powers, and public opinion could only assume that there was some reluctance to do so at Paris which it resented. Indeed the Italian Government had had to exercise considerable influence with the press to prevent more disagreeable things being said than were actually published, and he was fully conscious that great prejudice had been caused. He further said he had had to arrange matters with the Prime Minister directly, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs had gone to Pisa to meet Count Berchtold, and that Signor Giolitti had been well-disposed and very anxious to get the question settled; otherwise it might be in abeyance still. From which I infer that Signor Giolitti has given some engagement to France in regard to frontier questions which has been sufficient to satisfy Monsieur Poincaré.

It was apparently at their last interview that Signor Giolitti told Monsieur Barrère, as I have reported in my telegram No. 149 of to-day's date,⁽²⁾ that he was

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch was sent to Paris.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above.]

favourably disposed to the idea of entering into arrangements with ourselves and with France for safeguarding our interests in North Africa. Monsieur Barrère, in volunteering this information to me, said he had not yet informed his Government. This is, I imagine, due to his not having received any definite instructions to approach this matter.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

No. 464.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 46358/4/12/44.

(No. 335.) Confidential.

Sir,

Rome, D. October 27, 1912.

R. November 2, 1912.

In my despatch No. 328 of the 19th instant⁽¹⁾ reporting the signature of the treaty of Lausanne, and in Mr. Dering's previous despatches, reference has been made to a second treaty, the text of which has been kept secret.

I gather from the Minister for Foreign Affairs that this second instrument will become public as soon as it has been presented, presumably simultaneously, to both the Italian and Turkish Parliaments.

Now that some brief interval has elapsed it is easier to form an appreciation of the impression which the signature of the Treaty of peace has made on this country. It has certainly not been received with enthusiasm. On the other hand there has been no great opposition to or criticism of its provisions except in the relatively few organs of the constitutional opposition, which is in conspicuous minority. I gather that the press which is notoriously open to official influence in this country, received its orders not to criticise, and certainly a study of the principal Italian papers would convey the impression that a general moderate approval is the prevailing note. Behind this however there is a public opinion which makes itself felt in intimate conversation from which one derives the conclusion that the approval or acceptance of the terms of peace is distinctly cold. It is generally recognised that the moment had arrived when peace had to be, and that it might have led to infinite complications if Italy had found herself fighting side by side with the Balkan States. Hostilities could only have been continued under conditions to which it would have been difficult for Italy to give effect, and which would have been most unwelcome to the other great Powers. Certain concessions had therefore to be made, and these have led the Italians to recognise that they were not quite in a position to dictate terms as unquestioned victors, and that their success in this protracted war was not quite so overwhelming as they have claimed it to be. The feeling is also growing that if they were to make these concessions, peace ought to have been possible many months ago, and that their action in Tripoli was not pushed forward with sufficient energy in the early months.

Official reports and journalistic exaggeration had credited Italian arms with a long series of brilliant achievements and the impression now prevails that the net results of the peace are not quite commensurate with what the nation was persuaded it had accomplished. There is probably also a consciousness that things are not quite as they are represented to be. The annual payment which shall not be less than 80,000*l.*, and which may be capitalised on demand of either of the contracting parties, described as representing the values of the revenues derived by the Ottoman Empire from Tripoli, is obviously greatly in excess of the amount which was really encashed, and the balance may be regarded as in the nature of an indemnity, to

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. (F.O. 44836/4/12/44.) It enclosed the text of the treaty of peace signed at Ouchy, to be known as the Treaty of Lausanne. *cp. infra*, pp. 438-42, No. 466, and *encl.*]

which as such Italy would never after a year of war, have openly admitted her liability. The capital sum will no doubt have at once to be provided, amounting to some 2,000,000*l.* sterling, and I understand that to reduce it to this amount was one of the great difficulties which the negotiators encountered, the demand of the Turkish Government being for 4,000,000*l.*, a sum which it would have been obviously impossible to speciously describe as representing the value to Turkey of the revenues derived from Tripoli and Cyrenaica.

If the terms of peace have been slightly disappointing to Italian pride, it is largely because the mass of the people had assumed their advantage to be more overwhelming than it really was, and in any case there is a great general feeling of relief that the war is over, and that the principal object in view has been gained, and gained without any disturbance of the country's economic and financial position and development. On the credit side there is moreover the legitimate moral satisfaction of realising that Italy for the first time in her history, standing quite alone, has found her organisation and administration to have been adequate to carry a big national enterprise to a successful conclusion.

I have, &c.

RENELL RODD.

No. 465.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 44836/4/12/44.

(No. 261.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 15, 1912.

Italian sovereignty over Tripoli and Cyrenaica has now been recognised by H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment]. In Y[our] E[xcellency's] tel[egram] No. 141 of the 18th October⁽²⁾ you reported the hope expressed by the Italian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that no conditions would be attached to the desired recognition on the part of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment]. The wishes of the Italian Gov[ernment] have in this respect been met. But while H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] have attached no conditions to their public recognition of the Italian annexation of these provinces, the Italian Gov[ernment] has been given clearly to understand, as Y[our] E[xcellency] is aware, that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] expect Italian concurrence and support in their present project for the thorough modification of the Capitulatory régime in Egypt. I would in this connection refer Y[our] E[xcellency] to the concluding para[graph] of my despatch No. 243 of Oct[ober] 18,⁽³⁾ containing a categorical assurance on the part of the Italian Ambassador of the favourable disposition of his Gov[ernment] in regard to the matter at issue. On a later occasion, as Y[our] E[xcellency] was informed in my despatch No. 245 of Oct[ober] 22,⁽⁴⁾ the Marquis Imperiali informed me, in respect of the Capitulations in Egypt, that, as far as his Gov[ernment] were concerned, I might regard the matter as settled.

H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] are convinced of the firm intention of the Italian Gov[ernment] to translate into action, in due course, the promises thus given. I therefore consider it desirable that the Italian Gov[ernment] sh[ould] be made aware, at an early opportunity, of the nature of the scheme, to the general support of which they are pledged.

I accordingly tr[an]s[mit] to Y[our] E[xcellency] herewith copy of a des[patch] upon this subject which has already been addressed to H[is] M[ajesty's] Ambassador at Paris,⁽⁵⁾ enclosing two copies of the draft articles, which form the basis of the line of reform upon which H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] with the consent of the Capitulatory powers, propose to proceed to the modification of the Capitulatory régime

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch was repeated to Cairo (No. 166); to Paris (No. 550).]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. *v. supra*, p. 434, *Ed. note.*]

⁽³⁾ [Sir Edward Grey's despatch to Sir F. Bertie No. 439 of September 5, 1912 (F.O. 25597/15835/12/44) refers to the question of the capitulations. *cp. supra*, p. 434, *Ed. note.*]

in Egypt. In para[graph] 3 of that desp[atch] Y[our] E[xcellency will observe an allusion to the undertakings given by France in this connection in the year 1904.⁽¹⁾ Y[our] E[xcellency] should also refer to Lord Lansdowne's desp[atch] No. 124 to Sir F. Bertie of July 6, 1904.⁽⁵⁾

Y[our] E[xcellency] sh[oul]d preface the communic[atio]n which you will now be good enough to make to the Italian Gov[ernmen]t in the sense of the present desp[atch] with an allusion to Lord Lansdowne's above-mentioned desp[atch], and you should further use your discretion in incorporating in your note such portions of my desp[atch] to Sir F. Bertie as, mutatis mutandis, are fitted to accompany the communication of the draft articles to the Italian Gov[ernmen]t.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

(¹) [The reference is to "the undertaking given by France in 1904 not to obstruct the action of Great Britain in any manner." (cp. Article I of the Anglo-French Declaration of April 8, 1904, *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. II, p. 404.)]

(⁵) [This despatch referred to the conditions upon which it was proposed by Great Britain "that the Italian Gov[ernmen]t should, in giving their adhesion to the Khedivial Decree, also give to H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t an assurance corresponding with that given by France in the 1st Article of the Anglo-French Declaration." (F.O. Italy 888. Lord Lansdowne to Sir F. Bertie, No. 124, of July 6, 1904.) cp *infra*, pp. 443-4, No 467, and *encl.*]

No. 466.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 52258/4/12/44.

(No. 378.)

Sir,

Rome, D. December 2, 1912.

R. December 7, 1912.

With reference to my despatch No. 375 of the 27th ultimo,⁽²⁾ I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Preliminary Convention which was signed by the Italian and Turkish Plenipotentiaries at Lausanne simultaneously with the Treaty of Peace and which it was agreed to regard as secret until the submission of the latter to Parliament.

This Convention is the substantive document to which I referred in my despatch No. 359 of the 14th ultimo.⁽³⁾

Annexed to it are:—

- (1) the Italian Decree of the 17th October,
- (2) the Ottoman firman addressed to the inhabitants of Tripoli and Cyrenaica,
- (3) an Ottoman firman regarding the introduction of reforms into the administration of the Ægean Islands and the grant of an amnesty to their inhabitants and
- (4) the Treaty of Peace.

The Convention together with its annexes may thus be regarded as the Instrument embodying the complete terms of peace as arranged at Lausanne.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

Enclosure in No. 466

Provisional Treaty of Peace between Italy and Turkey.

Signed at Lausanne, October 15, 1912 (¹)

Sa Majesté le Roi d'Italie et Sa Majesté l'Empereur des Ottomans, animés d'un égal désir de faire cesser l'état de guerre existant entre les deux Pays et en vue de la difficulté d'y parvenir,

(¹) [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Colonial Office (at their request).]

(²) [Not reproduced. It reported the introduction of a Bill in the Italian Chamber of Deputies for the approval of the Treaty of Peace. (F.O. 51386/4/12/44.)]

(³) [Not reproduced. It referred to some paragraphs that had appeared in Swiss press. (F.O. 48995/4/12/44.)]

(⁴) [Printed in *Atti Parlamentari*, No. 1200]

provenant de l'impossibilité pour l'Italie de déroger à la loi du 25 février, 1912, qui a proclamé sa souveraineté sur la Tripolitaine et sur la Cyrénaïque, et pour l'Empire Ottoman de formellement reconnaître cette souveraineté, ont nommé Leurs Plénipotentiaires :

SA MAJESTÉ LE ROI D'ITALIE

Monsieur PIETRO BERTOLINI, Grand-Croix de l'Ordre de la Couronne d'Italie, Grand-Officier de l'Ordre des SS. Maurice et Lazare, Député au Parlement;
Monsieur GUIDO FUSINATO, Grand-Croix de l'Ordre de la Couronne d'Italie, Grand-Officier de l'Ordre des SS. Maurice et Lazare, Député au Parlement, Conseiller d'Etat;
Monsieur GIUSEPPE VOLPI, Commandeur des Ordres des SS. Maurice et Lazare et de la Couronne d'Italie;

SA MAJESTÉ L'EMPEREUR DES OTTOMANS

Son Excellence MÉHEMMED NABY BEY, Grand-Cordon de l'Ordre Impérial de l'Osmanié, Envoyé extraordinaire et Ministre plénipotentiaire de Sa Majesté l'Empereur des Ottomans;
Son Excellence ROUMBEOGLOU FAHREDDIN BEY, Grand-Officier de l'Ordre Impérial du Medjidié, Commandeur de l'Ordre Impérial de l'Osmanié, Envoyé extraordinaire et Ministre plénipotentiaire de Sa Majesté l'Empereur des Ottomans;

lesquels, après avoir échangé leur pleins pouvoirs respectifs, trouvés en bonne et due forme, sont convenus du *modus procedendi* secret suivant :—

I.

Le Gouvernement Impérial s'engage à ce que dans un délai de trois jours au plus tard un Firman Impérial soit émané, adressé aux populations de la Tripolitaine et de la Cyrénaïque, conforme au texte ci-joint (Annexe n. 1).

II.

Le représentant du Sultan et les chefs religieux devront être préalablement agréés par le Gouvernement Royal.

Les appointements du susdit représentant et des Naibs seront fixés d'accord par les deux Gouvernements et payés sur les recettes locales; ceux du Cadi seront au contraire payés par le Gouvernement Impérial.

Le nombre des susdits chefs religieux ne pourra pas surpasser le nombre de ceux existant au moment de la déclaration de la guerre.

III.

Le Gouvernement Royal s'engage à ce que dans un délai de trois jours au plus tard à dater de la promulgation du Firman Impérial mentionné à l'article 1, un Décret Royal soit émané conforme au texte ci-joint (Annexe n. 2).

IV.

Le Gouvernement Impérial s'engage à ce que dans un délai de trois jours au plus tard à dater de la promulgation du Firman Impérial mentionné à l'article I, un Iradé Impérial soit émané conforme au texte ci-joint (Annexe n. 3).

V.

Immédiatement après la promulgation des trois actes unilatéraux susdits les Plénipotentiaires des deux Hautes Parties contractantes signeront un Traité public conforme au texte ci-joint (Annexe n. 4).

VI.

Il reste naturellement entendu et consacré par le présent Accord que le Gouvernement Impérial s'engage à ne pas envoyer et à ne pas permettre l'envoi de Turquie en Tripolitaine et Cyrénaïque d'armes, de munitions, de soldats et d'officiers.

VII.

Les dépenses supportées respectivement par les deux Gouvernements pour l'entretien des prisonniers de guerre et des otages seront considérées comme compensées.

VIII.

Les deux Hautes Parties contractantes s'engagent à maintenir secret le présent Accord.

Toutefois, les deux Gouvernements se réservent la faculté de rendre public cet Accord au moment de la présentation du Traité public (Annexe n. 4) aux Parlements respectifs.

Le présent Accord entrera en vigueur le jour même de sa signature.

IX.

Il est bien entendu que les Annexes mentionnés dans le présent Accord en forment partie intégrante.

En foi de quoi les Plénipotentiaires ont signé le présent Accord et y ont apposé leurs cachets.

Fait à Lausanne, en deux exemplaires, le 15 octobre, 1912.

(L.S.) PIETRO BERTOLINI.

(L.S.) MEHEMMED NABY.

(L.S.) GUIDO FUSINATO.

(L.S.) ROUMBEOGLOU FAHREDDIN.

(L.S.) GIUSEPPE VOLPI.

ANNEXE N. 1.

Aux habitants de la Tripolitaine et de la Cyrénaïque,

Mon Gouvernement se trouvant d'une part dans l'impossibilité de vous donner les secours efficaces qui vous sont nécessaires pour défendre votre pays, soucieux d'autre part de votre bonheur présent et avenir, voulant éviter la continuation d'une guerre désastreuse pour vous et vos familles et dangereuse pour Notre Empire; afin de faire renaître dans votre pays la paix et la prospérité; Me prévalant de Mes droits souverains Je vous concède une pleine et entière autonomie. Votre pays sera régi par des nouvelles lois et des règlements spéciaux, à la préparation desquels vous apporterez la contribution de vos conseils afin qu'ils correspondent à vos besoins et à vos coutumes.

Je nomme auprès de vous comme Mon représentant Mon fidèle serviteur Chemseddin Bey, avec le titre de Naib-ul-Sultan, que Je charge de la protection des intérêts ottomans dans votre pays. Le mandat que Je lui confère a une durée de cinq ans; passé ce délai, Je Me réserve de renouveler son mandat ou bien de pouvoir à sa succession.

Notre intention étant que les dispositions de la loi sacrée du Chéri restent constamment en vigueur, Nous Nous réservons dans ce but la nomination du Cadi, qui à son tour nommera les Naïbs parmi les ulémas locaux, conformément aux prescriptions du Chéri. Les émoluments de ce Cadi seront payés par Nous et ceux du Naib-ul-Sultan aussi bien que ceux des autres fonctionnaires du Chéri seront prélevés sur les recettes locales.

ANNEXE N. 2.

SA MAJESTÉ LE ROI D'ITALIE.

Vu la loi du 25 février, 1912, n. 88, par laquelle la Tripolitaine et la Cyrénaïque ont été soumises à la souveraineté pleine et entière du Royaume d'Italie;

Dans le but de hâter la pacification des susdites provinces;

Sur la proposition du Conseil des Ministres;

Nous avons décrété et décrétons:

Article 1^{er}. Pleine et entière amnistie est accordée aux habitants de la Tripolitaine et de la Cyrénaïque, qui aient pris part aux hostilités ou qui se seraient compromis en leur occasion, sauf les crimes de droit commun. En conséquence, aucun individu de quelque classe ou condition qu'il soit ne pourra être poursuivi ou troublé dans sa personne ou ses biens ou dans l'exercice de ses droits en raison de ses actes politiques ou militaires ou bien des opinions qu'il aurait exprimées pendant les hostilités. Les personnes détenues et déportées de ce fait seront immédiatement remises en liberté.

Article 2. Les habitants de la Tripolitaine et de la Cyrénaïque continueront à jouir comme par le passé de la plus grande liberté dans la pratique du culte musulman. Le nom de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan, comme Kalife, continuera à être prononcé dans les prières publiques des Musulmans, et Son représentant est reconnu en la personne nommée par Elle; ses appointement[s] seront prélevés sur les recettes locales.

Les droits des fondations pieuses (vakouf) seront respectés comme par le passé et aucune entrave ne sera apportée aux relations des Musulmans avec le chef religieux appelé Cadi, qui sera nommé par le Cheik-ul-Islamat et avec le Naïbs nommés par lui même et dont les appointements seront prélevés sur les recettes locales.

Article 3. Le susdit représentant est aussi reconnu à l'effet de la protection des intérêts de l'Empire Ottoman et des sujets ottomans, tels qu'ils subsistent dans les deux Provinces après la loi du 25 février, 1912, no. 83 [sic 88].

Article 4. Une Commission, nommée par Décret Royal et dont formeront part aussi des notables indigènes, devra proposer les règlements civils et administratifs pour les deux Provinces, en s'inspirant aux principes de la liberté et au respect des usages et des coutumes locaux.

ANNEXE No. 3.

Il sera procédé à des réformes administratives et judiciaires afin d'assurer aux habitants des îles de la mer Egée sujettes à la souveraineté ottomane, la distribution égale de la justice, la sécurité et le bien-être sans distinction de culte et de religion.

Les fonctionnaires et les juges seront nommés parmi les personnes notoires connaissant la langue locale et ayant la capacité voulue.

Pleine et entière amnistie est accordée aux susdits habitants qui aient pris part aux hostilités ou qui se seraient compromis en leur occasion, sauf les crimes de droit commun. En conséquence, aucun individu de quelque classe ou condition qu'il soit ne pourra être poursuivi ou troublé dans sa personne ou ses biens ou dans l'exercice de ses droits en raison de ses actes politiques ou militaires ou bien des opinions qu'il aurait exprimées pendant les hostilités. Les personnes détenues et déportées de ce fait seront immédiatement remises en liberté.

ANNEXE No. 4 (5)

Sa Majesté le Roi d'Italie et Sa Majesté l'Empereur des Ottomans animés par un égal désir de faire cesser l'état de guerre existant entre les deux pays, ont nommé leurs plénipotentiaires :—

[Voir le préambule du présent Accord.]

lesquels, après avoir échangé leurs pleins pouvoirs respectifs et les avoir trouvés en bonne et due forme, sont convenus des articles suivants :

Art. 1.—Les deux Gouvernements s'engagent à donner immédiatement après la signature du présent Traité, les dispositions nécessaires pour la cessation immédiate et simultanée des hostilités. Des Commissaires spéciaux seront envoyés sur les lieux pour assurer l'exécution des susdites dispositions.

Art. 2.—Les deux Gouvernements s'engagent à donner immédiatement après la signature du présent Traité l'ordre de rappel de leurs officiers, de leurs troupes, ainsi que de leurs fonctionnaires civils, respectivement le Gouvernement Ottoman de la Tripolitaine et de la Cyrénaïque et le Gouvernement Italien des îles qu'il a occupées dans la mer Egée.

L'effective évacuation des îles susdites par les officiers, les troupes et les fonctionnaires civils italiens aura lieu immédiatement après que la Tripolitaine et la Cyrénaïque auront été évacuées par les officiers, les troupes et les fonctionnaires civils ottomans.

Art. 3.—Les prisonniers de guerre et les otages seront échangés dans le plus bref délai possible.

Art. 4.—Les deux Gouvernements s'engagent à accorder pleine et entière amnistie, le Gouvernement Royal aux habitants de la Tripolitaine, et de la Cyrénaïque et le Gouvernement Impérial aux habitants des îles de la mer Egée sujettes à la souveraineté ottomane, lesquels aient pris part aux hostilités ou qui se seraient compromis en leur occasion, sauf les crimes de droit commun. En conséquence aucun individu de quelque classe ou condition qu'il soit ne pourra être poursuivi ou troublé dans sa personne ou ses biens ou dans l'exercice de ses droits en raison de ses actes politiques ou militaires ou bien des opinions qu'il aurait exprimées pendant les hostilités. Les personnes détenues et déportées de ce fait seront immédiatement remises en liberté.

Art. 5.—Tous les traités, conventions et engagements de tout genre, espèce et nature conclus ou en vigueur entre les deux Hautes Parties contractantes antérieurement à la déclaration de la guerre, seront remis immédiatement en vigueur et les deux Gouvernements seront placés l'un vis-à-vis de l'autre, ainsi que les sujets respectifs, dans la situation identique dans laquelle ils se trouvaient avant les hostilités.

Art. 6.—L'Italie s'engage à conclure avec la Turquie, en même temps qu'elle renouvellera ses traités de commerce avec les autres Puissances, un traité de commerce sur la base du droit public européen, c'est-à-dire qu'elle consent à laisser à la Turquie toute son indépendance économique et le droit d'agir en matière commerciale et douanière à l'instar de toutes les Puissances européennes et sans être liée par les capitulations et d'autres actes à ce jour. Il est bien entendu que le dit traité de commerce ne sera mis en vigueur qu'en tant que seront mis en vigueur les traités de commerce conclus par la Sublime Porte avec les autres Puissances sur la même base.

(5) [Annexe No. 4 gives the exact terms of the Definitive Treaty of Peace signed on October 18, 1912. v. B.F.S.P., Vol. 106, pp. 1096-1103.]

En outre, l'Italie consent à l'élévation de 11% à 15% des droits de douane *ad valorem* en Turquie, ainsi qu'à l'établissement de nouveaux monopoles ou au prélèvement de surtaxe de consommation sur les cinq articles suivants : pétrole, papier à cigarettes, allumettes, alcool, cartes à jouer. Tout cela à la condition qu'une même traitement soit appliqué simultanément et sans distinctions aux importations des autres pays.

En tant qu'il s'agit de l'importation d'articles faisant l'objet d'un monopole, l'administration de ces monopoles est tenue de se fournir d'articles de provenance italienne suivant le pourcentage établi sur la base de l'importation annuelle de ces mêmes articles, pourvu que les prix à offrir pour la livraison des articles de monopole se conforment à la situation du marché au moment de l'achat, tout en prenant en considération les qualités des marchandises à fournir et la moyenne des prix, qui ont été notés dans les trois années précédentes à celle de la déclaration de la guerre pour lesdites qualités.

Il est en outre entendu que, si la Turquie, au lieu d'établir des nouveaux monopoles sur les cinq articles susmentionnés, se décidait à les frapper de surtaxes de consommation, ces surtaxes seraient imposées dans la même mesure aux produits similaires de la Turquie et de toute autre Nation.

Art. 7.—Le Gouvernement Italien s'engage à supprimer les bureaux de poste italiens fonctionnant dans l'Empire Ottoman en même temps que les autres Etats ayant des bureaux de poste en Turquie supprimeront les leurs.

Art. 8.—La Sublime Porte se proposant d'ouvrir, en conférence européenne ou autrement avec les Grandes Puissances intéressées, des négociations en vue de faire cesser le régime capitulaire en Turquie, en le remplaçant par le régime du droit international, l'Italie, en reconnaissant le bien-fondé de ces intentions de la Sublime Porte, déclare dès maintenant vouloir lui prêter à cet effet son plein et sincère appui.

Art. 9.—Le Gouvernement Ottoman voulant témoigner de sa satisfaction pour les bons et loyaux services qui lui ont été rendus par les sujets italiens employés dans ses administrations et qu'il s'était vu forcé de congédier lors des hostilités, se déclare prêt à les rétablir dans la situation qu'ils avaient quittée.

Un traitement de disponibilité leur sera payé pour les mois passés hors d'emploi et cette interruption de service ne portera aucun préjudice à ceux parmi ces employés qui auraient droit à une pension de retraite.

En outre le Gouvernement Ottoman s'engage à user de ses bons offices auprès des institutions avec lesquelles il est en rapport (Dettes publiques, Sociétés de Chemins de fer, Banques, etc.) pour qu'il en soit agi de même envers les sujets italiens, qui étaient à leur service et qui se trouvent dans des conditions analogues.

Art. 10.—Le Gouvernement Italien s'engage à verser annuellement à la caisse de la Dette Publique Ottomane pour compte du Gouvernement Impérial une somme correspondante à la moyenne des sommes qui dans chacune des trois années précédentes à celle de la déclaration de la guerre ont été affectées au service de la Dette Publique sur les recettes des deux Provinces. Le montant de la susdite annuité sera déterminé d'accord par deux commissaires nommés l'un par le Gouvernement Royal, l'autre par le Gouvernement Impérial. En cas de désaccord, la décision sera remise à un collège arbitral composé par les susdits commissaires et par un surarbitre nommé d'accord entre les deux Parties. Si l'accord ne s'établit pas à ce sujet, chaque Partie désignera une Puissance différente et le choix du surarbitre sera fait de concert par les Puissances ainsi désignées.

Le Gouvernement Royal ainsi que l'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane, par l'entremise du Gouvernement Impérial, auront la faculté de demander la substitution de l'annuité susdite par le paiement de la somme correspondante capitalisée au taux du 4%.

Pour ce qui se réfère au précédent alinéa le Gouvernement Royal déclare de reconnaître dès à présent que l'annuité ne peut être inférieure à la somme de lire italiennes deux millions et qu'il est disposé à verser à l'Administration de la Dette Publique la somme capitalisée correspondante, aussitôt que demande en sera faite.

Art. 11.—Le présent Traité entrera en vigueur le jour même de sa signature.

En foi de quoi les Plénipotentiaires ont signé le présent Traité et y ont apposé leurs cachets.

Les soussignés délégués plénipotentiaires déclarent que les quatre Annexes ci-dessus forment partie intégrale du présent Accord préliminaire secret en conformité de l'article 9 du même Accord.

(L.S.) PIETRO BERTOLINI.
(L.S.) GUIDO FUSINATO.
(L.S.) GIUSEPPE VOLPI.

(L.S.) MEHEMMED NABY.
(L.S.) ROUMBEOGLOU FAHREDDIN.

Lausanne, le 15 octobre, 1912.

No. 467.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 55336/15835/12/16.

(No. 390.)

Rome, D. December 14, 1912.

Sir,

R. December 28, 1912.

I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of a Note which, in accordance with the instructions contained in your despatch No. 261 of the 15th ultimo,⁽¹⁾ I have addressed to the Italian Government explaining the nature of the proposed scheme for the modification of the capitulatory régime in Egypt and expressing the hope that they will agree thereto.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

Enclosure in No. 467.

Sir R. Rodd to the Marquis di San Giuliano.

Monsieur le Ministre,

Rome, December 10, 1912.

When the question arose in 1904 of obtaining the adhesion of various foreign Governments to the Khedivial Decree concerning the finances of Egypt, Lord Lansdowne furnished to the Italian Ambassador in London the draft of a letter which he intended to address to his Excellency on the subject of the conditions upon which His Majesty's Government proposed that the Royal Italian Government should, in giving their adhesion to the Decree, also give to His Majesty's Government an assurance corresponding with that given by the French Government in the first Article of the Anglo-French Agreement of April 8, 1904, and subsequently by the German Government. In this Article the French Government undertook not to oppose the policy of His Majesty's Government in Egypt, either by demanding that a limit of time should be imposed upon the occupation of Egypt by Great Britain, or in any other manner. These words were interpreted by His Majesty's Government, as Lord Lansdowne informed his Excellency Monsieur Pansa at the time, as implying that the Power which gave the assurance would loyally support the policy of His Majesty's Government in Egypt and would assist them more especially in case it should hereafter become desirable to revise the international arrangements prevailing at that time in that country, generally referred to as the Capitulations. His Majesty's Government had also discussed the same point with the French and German Governments and had found no difficulty in coming to an understanding in both cases.⁽²⁾

As Your Excellency is aware, His Majesty's Government did not fail to comply with the desire expressed by the Royal Italian Government in October last that recognition should be afforded by Great Britain to the sovereignty of Italy over Tripoli and Cyrenaica as soon as peace had been signed. The Marquis Imperiali and Sir E. Grey had, on October 18th and 22nd,⁽³⁾ conversations of a wholly satisfactory nature on the subject of this recognition, and His Majesty's Government have asked for no special conditions for the commerce of Great Britain in the new Italian provinces, contenting themselves with the assurance of the Italian Ambassador that Great Britain would in this respect have complete equality of treatment with other nations. At the same time Sir E. Grey mentioned to Marquis Imperiali the project which His Majesty's Government have in view for the thorough modification of the Capitulatory régime in Egypt. It was on October 18th that the Italian Ambassador was so good as to assure

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 437-8, No. 465.]

⁽²⁾ [The text of the Anglo-French Declaration of April 8, 1904, is given in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. II, pp. 404-6. For the question of the adherence of the Powers to the Khedivial Decree, v. *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. III, pp. 17-24.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 434, *Ed. note*; p. 437, No. 465.]

His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that he would find the Royal Italian Government favourably disposed as regards the project. On October 22nd Marquis Imperiali confirmed this and stated that when other nations agreed to a modification or abolition of the Capitulations in Egypt, the Italian Government would be quite ready to do so. Sir E. Grey replied that in this event His Majesty's Government would of course agree to Italians in Egypt being on an equal footing with other nations; upon which Marquis Imperiali gave His Majesty's Secretary of State to understand that he might regard the matter as settled. In full confidence therefore that they will receive the concurrence and support of the Italian Government in their project for the modification of the Capitulations in Egypt, His Majesty's Government have now instructed me to address to your Excellency a note explaining the nature of the scheme which has been elaborated.

Of late years it has become increasingly clear that the present cumbrous machinery of the Capitulatory system, which is both unsuitable and unnecessary at the present stage of Egypt's development, must be replaced, and that the country, in the interests of all its inhabitants both native and European, must be freed from the trammels of that system. In the opinion of His Majesty's Government the moment has now arrived when this measure of reform should no longer be delayed.

While convinced, however, of the desirability of removing the impediments that arise from the present incoherent system of internationalism, His Majesty's Government fully recognise the duty and necessity of according special consideration to the international element in Egypt. The interests of this element have accordingly been carefully borne in mind in framing draft articles, which have been submitted to the French Government and of which I have the honour to transmit copy herewith to your Excellency.⁽⁴⁾ These articles form the basis of the line of reform upon which His Majesty's Government, with the assent of the Capitulatory Powers, propose to proceed. In communicating them to your Excellency I am to express the hope of His Majesty's Government that, in view of what I have had the honour to recapitulate above, the Royal Government will be so good as to take them into their favourable consideration and will agree to similar provisions, thereby affording the friendly concurrence and support which His Majesty's Government have every reason to anticipate that they will receive.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

(4) [Not reproduced. They were submitted to the French Government as the result of Sir Edward Grey's despatch to Sir F. Bertie, No. 439 of September 5, 1912. *cp supra*, pp. 437-8, No. 465, and note (3).]

No. 468.

Extract from the Annual Report on France for the Year 1912.

(Enclosure in Sir F. Bertie's Despatch No. 407A, D. August 1, 1913, R. August 3, 1913.)

F.O. 46009/46009/13.

Seizure of French Merchant Vessels.

37. Difficulties occurred between the Italian and French Government in regard to the treatment by the Italian authorities of two French merchant ships. The "Carthage," carrying mails, left Marseilles on the 15th January for Tunis. She was stopped on the 17th of that month by an Italian torpedo-boat, whose commander wished to destroy an aeroplane on board the "Carthage." On the refusal of her captain to permit this she was taken to Cagliari. As the condition of her release, the Italian Government required an undertaking from the French Government that a watch should be kept in Tunis on the aeroplane, which the Italian Government

professed to have the certainty was intended for the Turkish Government, its owner, M. Duval, having a contract with the Turkish authorities. M. Poincaré refused to consent to this condition, but he informed the Italian Government, as a matter of courtesy, of a spontaneous declaration of the aviator's father that his son never intended to place his aeroplane at the disposal of the Turks. The "Carthage" was thereupon released.

38. On the 17th January the Italian Ambassador informed M. Poincaré that a French ship was conveying twenty-nine Turkish officers to Tunis on their way to Tripoli, and requested that the French authorities would stop them from entering Tripoli. He based his application on article 6 of The Hague Convention of the 18th October, 1907. The French Government were aware, from a communication from the Turkish Ambassador, that twenty-nine members of the Red Crescent, whose names were given, were proceeding to Tripoli via Tunis, and this explanation was given to M. Tittoni. Delay occurred, however, in forwarding it to Rome, and on the 18th January the "Manouba," the vessel with the Turkish party on board, was stopped by an Italian torpedo-boat and taken to Cagliari. The French Chargé d'Affaires at Rome, on the assurance of the Italian Government that the Turkish officers were combatants, took upon himself to authorise the captain of the "Manouba" to surrender them to the Italian authorities, and they were incarcerated at Cagliari.

39. M. Poincaré made a declaration in the Chamber that the French Government would insist on the delivery of the prisoners. Any points of a controversial character could be referred later on to arbitration. An agreement was come to between the two Governments. The twenty-nine Turks were delivered up, the French Government undertaking to prevent any of them not belonging to the Red Crescent from proceeding to Tripoli across French territory. Twenty-seven were found to belong to that society and were allowed to proceed, one was ill and another not being able to prove his identity was detained.

40. These two cases caused a good deal of ill-feeling between Italy and France, and the questions arising out of them were the subject of a despatch which you addressed to me on the 12th February (No. 25, Treaty). That despatch pointed out that the "Manouba" having been seized and taken to Cagliari in order to investigate the character of the suspected persons, it was evident that the Italian authorities were not acting under article 47 of The Hague Convention, but intended to bring the vessel before a Prize Court on the charge of unneutral service in violation of article 45 (2) of the Declaration of London which would be the natural course to adopt in ordinary circumstances and the course most consonant in like circumstances with British belligerent interests. As instructed by you I took advantage of an opportunity which occurred to state to the Minister for Foreign Affairs the views of His Majesty's Government. M. Poincaré's observations on the subject were to the effect that the Italian Government had announced their intention to act during the war with Turkey in accordance with the principles of the unratified Declaration of London. He was not aware how far His Majesty's Government might consider those principles applicable where British interests were in question. The reply which I made to M. Poincaré by your direction was that His Majesty's Government would certainly desire that the principles of the Declaration should be so applied so far as possible.

41. As you learnt from the French Ambassador in the month of May M. Poincaré was uneasy as to the future situation in the Mediterranean.⁽¹⁾ Hitherto that sea had been kept out of the sphere of action covered by the Triple Alliance. M. Poincaré anticipated that, when the time came for the renewal of the alliance, Germany and Austria, in view of the changed conditions established or about to be established in the Mediterranean, as a result of the Italo-Turkish war, would require that the provisions of the alliance should be so revised as to extend to its waters the engagements of its signatories to each other. M. Poincaré considered that this would be a very serious matter for both France and England. France would have great

(1) [This subject will be treated in a later volume.]

difficulty in making head against such a combination and would, in the event of war, incur great risk and difficulties in transporting troops from Algeria to Europe. He thought that the matter should receive earnest attention. The problem would exist in time of peace as well as in time of war, since Turkey and others might, even in time of peace, consider it desirable to associate themselves with such a combination which would probably become the dominating one in the Mediterranean. M. Poincaré's idea was for some mutual engagement between France, Italy, and Great Britain for the maintenance of the *status quo* between the Suez Canal and the Straits of Gibraltar.

42. In commenting to me on the statement by M. Cambon of M. Poincaré's view, you expressed the opinion that no steps could be taken in the matter during the continuance of the Turco-Italian hostilities, but that when the time came for recognising the Italian annexation of Tripoli, His Majesty's Government might demand from Italy, in return for the recognition, a reciprocal engagement such as M. Poincaré had suggested.

43. On the 6th June M. Cambon, alluding to the question of a conference to bring the war to an end, stated that M. Poincaré considered that it should be limited to the question of the war.⁽²⁾ M. Cambon pointed out that the question of the islands in the Ægean Sea occupied by the Italians would necessarily come up. The Greek population of the islands would appeal for a guarantee of protection against Turkish reprisals, and other Greek and Christian populations in the Turkish Empire would make appeals to the Powers. The question of the Straits would be raised from the commercial point of view, which would oblige Russia to raise the strategic side of the matter. In M. Cambon's opinion, it would soon be desirable to consider the question of admitting Russia to the Mediterranean. He alluded to the possibility of the Triple Alliance being extended to cover the Mediterranean; Germany as the price of her support there might get from Italy a coaling station in Tripoli, which would eventually become a German naval station. The ratio of forces in the Mediterranean would be changed, and it would be very desirable that Russia should have a position in that sea, so that she might not have any reason for entering into secret conversation at Berlin on the subject. It might, M. Cambon thought, be desirable that a conference should take place in order that the question of the Straits might be dealt with, and he suggested that it might be useful to discuss the matter between London, Paris, and St. Petersburg. You replied that you thought that there was much force in what he said. You assumed that His Majesty's Government would be prepared to maintain the attitude as to the Straits which had been agreed to with M. Isvolsky in 1908, namely, that the treaty should be revised so as to give Russia, in time of peace, freedom to go in and out through the Straits, and to secure that Turkey should not give to any one belligerent greater privileges than to another. As to the extension of the Triple Alliance to the Mediterranean, possibly a proposal might be made to Italy, when the war was over, and the time came to recognise the sovereignty of Italy over Tripoli, for some reciprocal arrangement under which the *status quo* would not be disturbed in Tripoli, if Italy undertook not to disturb the *status quo* in Egypt and Tunis. Such an arrangement would relieve her of any apprehension of being disturbed in her possession of Tripoli by England or France, and consequently, of the motive for extending the Triple Alliance to the Mediterranean.

44. According to M. Paléologue the French Government did not at all concur in M. Cambon's view that at a conference the questions of the Isles, the Straits, and Macedonia must inevitably be raised, and that consequently it should be avoided.

45. In regard to M. Cambon's suggestion that it would be to the advantage of France and England that Russia should have a naval station in the Mediterranean, I beg leave to point out that in a war in which Russia was on the side of France and England she could make use of her ships of the French and British ports in that sea. If she possessed a naval station of her own anywhere in the eastern part of the

(2) [*v. supra*, pp. 396-7, No. 408.]

Mediterranean it would add to her power of injury to British interests if she were at war with us until we evicted her, for from an enfeebled Turkey she would probably obtain a right of way through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, and her ships of war would come out of the Black Sea into the Mediterranean, make raids on our commerce, using the Russian naval station as a refuge and slipping back into the Sea of Marmora, the gates of which at the Dardanelles would be closed against any pursuing British squadron.

46. In May, under instructions from Rome, the Italian Ambassador in Paris informed M. Poincaré, as you learnt from M. Cambon, that Italy did not intend to retain after the war the islands which she had seized in the Ægean Sea. She would develop their resources and raise the lot of the inhabitants by building schools, making roads, &c., so that when they were restored to Turkey, they might still constitute small centres of Hellenism. M. Poincaré replied that it was a novel departure to treat territories merely occupied during war as if they were actually annexed, and he also deprecated the intention of creating fresh centres of Hellenism, which would be continual sources of difficulty to the Powers as Crete was. You entirely shared M. Poincaré's views, and I informed his Excellency on the 25th May that if you were approached by the Italian Government on the subject, you would hold similar language to them.

47. In the early part of August the Italian Chargé d'Affaires asked M. Briand, who then was acting as French Minister for Foreign Affairs whether there existed a convention between France and England concerning the Ægean Sea. M. Briand gave an answer, in which you entirely concurred, viz., that there was not any such convention, but the relations between France and England were so friendly that any important event in the Ægean Sea would find them in agreement. There ensued a conversation between the British and French Governments as to the advisability and manner of warning the Italian Government against the retention of any of the islands which had been occupied by Italian troops. You considered that any representations to the Italian Government had best be made through the Italian Ambassadors at London and Paris. The conclusion of peace between Italy and Turkey put the question momentarily out of sight; but on the 13th November M. Poincaré told me that the Greek Minister in Paris had good reason to believe that the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs had during his visit to Berlin arranged with the German Government that Rhodes and another Ægean island should be retained by Italy, an arrangement in which the Austrian Government had concurred. M. Poincaré considered, he told me, that an early opportunity should be taken by the French and British Governments to remind the Italian Government of their assurances in regard to the islands and of the terms of the Italo-Turkish Treaty of Peace, subject to which the annexation of Tripoli by Italy had been recognised by France and England. He did not think that the friendship between France and Russia should be an obstacle to such representations. If Italy were to retain an island, Germany and Austria might each attempt to obtain possession of one also.

48. You were of opinion, and by your direction I so informed M. Poincaré, that inasmuch as Russian interests would be seriously affected should the Greeks remain in possession of Lemnos as well as of others of the islands, and one or more were retained by Italy, on account of the possibility of Russian exit from the Black Sea being barred by Greek and Italian mines, it would be expedient for the question of the Ægean islands to be first considered with the Russian Government.

49. To enquiries made by the Italian Ambassador in London as to why His Majesty's Government took so much interest in the fate of the Ægean islands, you stated, and I informed M. Poincaré of your reply to the Italian Ambassador, that if any Power attempted to obtain an Ægean island for a naval base His Majesty's Government would require something of the same nature, and other Powers would do likewise. His Majesty's Government had resisted the desire of the British naval authorities to obtain a base in the Eastern Mediterranean, as they had no wish to disturb the *status quo*.

50. In deference to your suggestion M. Poincaré said that he would raise the question of the islands with the Russian Government as well as with the Italian Government. He stated that the French Government could not admit the possession by Italy of any of the islands, for it would entirely alter the naval position in the Mediterranean.

Franco-Italian Declaration respecting Libya and Morocco.

51. M. Poincaré and the Italian Ambassador in Paris signed on the 28th October the following declaration, the text of which was communicated to the press :—

“ Le Gouvernement de la République française et le Gouvernement Royal d'Italie, désireux d'exécuter dans l'esprit le plus amical leurs accords de 1902, confirment leur mutuelle intention de n'apporter réciproquement aucun obstacle à la réalisation de toutes les mesures qu'ils jugeront opportun d'édicter, la France au Maroc et l'Italie en Libye.

“ Ils conviennent de même que le traitement de la nation la plus favorisée sera réciproquement assuré à la France en Libye et à l'Italie au Maroc : ledit traitement devant s'appliquer de la manière la plus large aux nationaux, aux produits, aux établissements et aux entreprises de l'un et l'autre État sans exception.”

52. On the 30th October the French Ambassador in London informed you that M. Poincaré entirely shared your view as to the advantage of an agreement with Italy for guaranteeing the possessions of the three States in North Africa, and that he thought of proposing such an agreement at Rome. You observed that “ guarantee ” was perhaps a rather strong word, which might imply combined action. Also “ possessions ” might be held not to cover Egypt. Your idea was rather an agreement to respect the *status quo* in North Africa, but you would sound the Italian Ambassador before putting forward a definite proposal.

CHAPTER LXXV.

THE ALBANIAN RISING,

MARCH 30—OCTOBER 21, 1911.

[*ED. NOTE.*—The centralizing policy of the Young Turks aroused acute discontent in Albania, especially among the Catholic Malissori in the north. The outbreak began on or about March 27, when the tribes of Hoti, Grudi, Kastrati, and Klementi rose. Reinforcements were sent to assist the Vali of Scutari on March 29, and early in April Tugtut Pasha was appointed to the command of the troops. In June the Catholic Mirdites joined in the revolt. The surrender of the insurgents in August was facilitated by an amnesty and by the promise of aid in rebuilding their ruined villages. The fighting on the frontier and the presence of thousands of starving refugees kept Montenegro in a state of continual excitement.]

No. 469.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey

F.O. 12086/14/11/44.

(No. 21.) Confidential.

Sir,

Belgrade, D. March 30, 1911.

R. April 8, 1911.

The events of the last two days would seem to justify the fears entertained here during the past few months of a rising in Albania this Spring. This morning I called upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs and asked his Excellency whether he thought the rising would prove serious and what attitude Serbia would adopt in the case of complications in the Balkans. His Excellency replied that it was impossible to foretell what course events would take. These would depend upon the ability of the Turkish Government to cope with the rising and upon the amount of support given to the Albanians from outside. To deal effectively with the movement the Turkish Authorities would have to strike at once, for otherwise if the insurgents continued to be successful in their attacks against the Turkish troops, their numbers would soon swell, and there was no knowing what proportions events might assume. He did not know how far Montenegro was pledged to the Albanians. There was no doubt that King Nicholas had received in a most friendly manner the Albanian refugees who had come into his kingdom; he had provided for their keep and allowed them to be supplied with arms. (These I have heard from another quarter were presented by a Garibaldi Association in Italy). As to the attitude of Serbia His Excellency went on to say that he could state in the most positive and categorical manner that the Government would not only not be content with merely holding aloof from the movement but would also use their best endeavours to prevent its development. They had been for some time past and were now continuing to give counsels of moderation at Cetinje. Upon my asking His Excellency what Serbia would do supposing Bulgaria were tempted by the opportunity to make an attack on Turkey, he said that in that case Serbia would be in a most difficult position and that she would then have to be guided by the circumstances of the moment; but for the present she hoped for peace and would strain every nerve in so far as was in her power to further its maintenance.

Monsieur de Hartwig, the Russian Minister, upon whom I called immediately after seeing Monsieur Milovanovitch also stated as his opinion that further developments would depend upon the capacity of the Turks to deal promptly with the rising. He told me that he was convinced that the Servian Government's earnest desire and set policy were the maintenance of peace, and he vaguely hinted that they had declined overtures to favour an insurrectionary movement in Albania. Monsieur de Hartwig alluded to the considerable reinforcement of the Austro-Hungarian troops which had been going on for some weeks past along the Drina and the Northern frontier of the Sandjak, and, in reply to a question of mine said that there was not the slightest doubt but that these troops would at once cross the frontier in case

of serious complications in Macedonia. Like Monsieur Milovanovitch, Monsieur de Hartwig, who is an authority on Balkan Affairs and remarkably well informed, said it was impossible at this early stage to foresee what might happen. The tone of both was decidedly pessimistic though they both seemed to think that there were hopes, if prompt and energetic action were taken, of the rising being localised.

With reference to the hint given by the Russian Minister as to the overtures made to Servia, I have the honour to report that I heard yesterday from an absolutely sure source that for some time past the King of Montenegro has been endeavouring to enter into negotiations with the Servian Government for joint action in Macedonia. His Majesty endeavoured to get King Peter to pay him a visit in company with the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs when they returned from Rome last month and upon Monsieur Milovanovitch refusing to countenance this visit on the ground that it might, at that moment, arouse suspicions in view of Montenegro's attitude towards the Albanian refugees, King Nicholas succeeded in obtaining that Monsieur Petkovitch, the Servian Minister at Cetinje, should be allowed to proceed to Belgrade with the secret mission of sounding the Servian Government as to whether they would be willing to come to terms with Montenegro for taking concerted action in Macedonia. Monsieur Petkovitch left 3 days ago for Cetinje with the reply that the Servian Government did not think the moment opportune; that the general political situation in Europe was not favourable; that the relations between the various Balkan States amongst themselves was so uncertain that the concerted action of two of them would probably lead to complications with the others; that Servia was determined to abstain from doing anything which might endanger peace in the Balkans, as a breach of that peace would certainly entail the reoccupation of the Sandjak; and that it was as much to Montenegro's interest as to Servia's to avoid further Austrian intervention in the Peninsula.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

MINUTES.

The counsels of moderation which the Italian and Russian Representatives have no doubt given to the Montenegrin Gov[ernmen]t seem very necessary as King Nicholas appears to have made determined efforts to induce Servia to take concerted action in Macedonia with Montenegro in support of the Albanians. Servia very wisely refused to join.

R. M.

3 4.11.

R. P. M.

Our representative, when he arrives, should severely discourage this mischievous activity on the part of the King of Montenegro.

L. M.

F. G.

No. 470.

Sir R. Paget to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 14202/14/11/44.

(No. 26.) Confidential.

Sir,

Belgrade, D. April 11, 1911.

R. April 18, 1911.

With reference to Mr. Barclay's Despatch No. 21 of the 30th Ultimo,⁽¹⁾ and more especially to that portion in which he mentions that Monsieur Petkovitch the Servian Minister in Cetinje, at the instigation of the Montenegrin Government, had visited Belgrade to lay before the Servian Government a proposal for joint action with

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

Montenegro in Macedonia, I have the honour to enclose herewith copy of a summary of the Servian reply communicated to my Italian Colleague by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and which Monsieur Baroli has kindly passed on to me.

Although the first part of this document states that the present moment is not opportune for action and counsels prudence in dealing with the Albanian question there later occur phrases such as " nous sommes prêts à nous entendre avec le Montenegro pour toute éventualité afin d'assurer l'unité complète des deux pays quoi qu'il arrive " and also the last paragraph, which practically signify readiness to fall in with the suggestion of the Montenegrin Government. Monsieur Baroli tells me that when he called the attention of Monsieur Milovanovitch to this point and to the fact that it somewhat conflicted with the attitude of absolute non-interference with the present incidents in Albania which he had understood the Servian Government desired to observe, His Excellency blandly replied that the assurances given to Montenegro must not be taken too seriously. Monsieur Baroli concludes under the circumstances that neither Montenegro nor Servia are in earnest on the question of joint action and that the communications which have passed are merely moves in a game being played with an eye to possible eventualities and the hegemony of the Serbs. Had the Servian Government merely turned a cold shoulder to the Montenegrin overtures King Nicholas might have found opportunity to proclaim that whilst he was prepared to champion Serb interests King Peter had been reluctant to join him.

Since my return to Belgrade on the first of this month I have had conversations both with Monsieur Milovanovitch and Monsieur Spalaikovitch, the Secretary General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, but they have said nothing of particular interest concerning the Albanian rising and merely repeated the assertions already made to Mr. Barclay that they hoped the movement would not extend and that Servia would use the best endeavours to prevent its development.

Meanwhile it seems that with the change of Cabinet at Sofia a change is about to take place in Serbo-Bulgarian relations. I am informed that through the Servian Chargé d'Affaires at Sofia Monsieur Geshoff has sent a message to the Servian Government enquiring their views concerning present events in Albania. Monsieur Milanovitch has replied that although the rising in Albania may for the present be considered as merely local it would be well, in case of the disturbances assuming a more serious character and in anticipation of any possible consequences such as Austria advancing into the Sandjak, that the Servian and Bulgarian Governments should keep in close touch and have an understanding for the protection of their interests. Monsieur Geshoff has in return intimated that the Bulgarian Government is prepared to receive further communications on the subject. This constitutes of course a certain modification of the usual distant relations which exist between the two countries but it is too soon to say whether the present beginnings will really develop into a better understanding.

I have, &c.

RALPH PAGET.

Copy sent to Sofia.

Enclosure in No. 470.

Summary of Servian Government's reply to Montenegrin Government's Overtures for a Serbo-Montenegrin Alliance.

Situation générale pas favorable, les forces qui semblent en faveur de l'indépendance des Balkans pas en prépondérance. Entre les États Balkaniques les rapports ne sont pas tels que nous autoriseraient à croire qu'il y aurait, le cas échéant, unité d'action et pour cela nous ne croyons pas désirable que des complications éclatent en ce moment ni en Albanie ni ailleurs dans la Péninsule. Nous désirons par conséquent faire tout le possible pour empêcher ou ajourner l'apparition des complications.

Nous sommes prêts à nous entendre avec le Monténégro pour toute éventualité afin d'assurer l'unité complète des deux pays quoi qu'il arrive. En ce qui concerne nos rapports avec les Albanais nous sommes d'avis qu'il faut faire ce qui est possible pour conserver leur confiance et pour ne pas les éloigner de nous et surtout pour empêcher qu'ils s'adressent aux autres et n'essayent d'obtenir d'eux ce qu'ils ne peuvent pas avoir de nous.

Si des mouvements albanais ne peuvent pas être empêchés il faut que nous fassions tout ce qui dépend de nous pour que ces mouvements conservent un caractère local et éviter qu'ils arrivent à un degré d'extension et de gravité qui pourraient donner occasion plausible à une intervention étrangère.

La situation générale dans les Balkans n'étant pas sûre et toute sorte de complication pouvant arriver d'aujourd'hui au lendemain indépendamment de nous et de notre volonté nous sommes d'avis de ne pas tarder de conclure une entente entre la Serbie et le Monténégro, afin d'être prêts de savoir chacun son rôle quoi qu'il arrive. Notre Ministre à Cettinje a reçu instructions suffisantes pour commencer des pourparlers dans ce but, et, le cas échéant, si la nécessité se présentait un délégué spécial Serbe partirait au moment propice pour Cettinje.

MINUTE.

The Servian document is vague and rather contradictory.

H. N.
L. M.
A. N.
M.

No. 471.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Vienna, April 18, 1911

During the past week the news from Albania has been very contradictory, but on the whole somewhat less favourable to the Turks than hitherto. A great deal of information appears daily in the Vienna newspapers with regard to Albanian affairs, and the clerical press seems to be particularly rich in such information, but as it is so biassed against the Young Turk régime, one has to accept it with great reserve. I saw Pallavicini, the acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, yesterday, and he still continues to take an optimistic view of the general situation in Albania, though he recognizes that the insurgents are scoring minor successes owing to the slow arrival of Turkish reinforcements. He is convinced that the Turks will get the upper hand of the insurrection in the long run, but that it may take them some six weeks to do so. In his opinion it was a mistake to appoint Thorgoot [Turgut] Pasha, a man detested by the Albanians, to command the Turkish forces, as his presence is likely to drive the Albanian insurgents to make a desperate resistance rather than to induce them to come to terms with the local Turkish authorities. Pallavicini seemed to think that the Turkish Government would act wisely if as soon as the military operations are over they were to recall Thorgoot and were to replace him by a moderate man who would try to negotiate the pacification of the Province. He thought that Izzet Pasha, now commanding in the Yemen, and who is an Albanian, might be a suitable person to be selected for this task.

In opposition to Pallavicini's optimistic views with regard to the situation in Albania, I must say that reports from well-informed persons who know that Province thoroughly, are to hand to the effect that the hatred among the population against the Young Turk régime is so violent that in their opinion an insurrection will no

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. II of 1911.]

sooner be suppressed in one part of Albania, than it will break out in another, and if this state of things were really to occur and Albania be kept in a state of ferment throughout the summer, it is quite possible that the conflagration may spread to Macedonia.

As regards the attitude of the King of Montenegro, Pallavicini did not seem to entertain any decided belief in its straightforwardness, but he thought that on the whole it was probable that the King would behave with prudence; in short he felt sure that he would temporize and await events so as not to compromise himself too much either in favour of the Turks or of the Albanians, until the one or the other obtained the upper hand. It is recognized here that the King is in a difficult position because it is suspected that he nurses the ambition of becoming some day Prince of an autonomous Albania, and that for that reason he cannot afford to lose the sympathies of the Albanians by treating them harshly at the present moment under pressure from Constantinople.

At the beginning of the Albanian revolt there seemed to be a little nervousness in Italy as to Austria's real attitude with regard to that event; suspicion of Austria was at once evoked but Pallavicini told me yesterday that the Italian Government seemed to be reassured in the matter. Personally I do not believe that the Austrian Government have in any way encouraged the rebellion, to have done so would mean that Aehrenthal had suddenly and completely changed his policy, and I have no reason to assume that he has done this. The two main factors in Aehrenthal's policy are to do everything that is possible to maintain good relations with Turkey and likewise with Italy. For him to intrigue in Albania would be to arouse at the same time the ill-will of both those two countries against the Dual Monarchy, and Aehrenthal would gain nothing tangible in return for such action. Austria does not want Albania but she will never allow Italy to set foot on that side of the Adriatic. Therefore Aehrenthal certainly does not wish the Albanian question to be raised just now if it can possibly be helped, but the clerical party here naturally take an interest in the protection of the Catholic Albanians, and for that reason the Austro-Hungarian Government cannot absolutely ignore the interests and protection of the Christian population in that Province. On these grounds the "Ballplatz" genuinely desires that a rapid pacification should be brought about of Northern Albania, for if the insurrection continues much longer, complications may occur with Italy, and the clerical party here may clamour for strong representations being addressed to Constantinople. Reshid Pasha, the Turkish Ambassador here, has repeatedly told me that he has addressed despatch after despatch to Constantinople, urging moderation towards the Albanians and advising that the chiefs should be bribed to keep quiet, and as the Ambassador is in continual contact with the "Ballplatz," I think he must be transmitting the wishes of the Austro-Hungarian Government to the Porte.

I have received information—which may very likely be correct—that the authorities in Bosnia, and especially the military authorities there, under the inspiration of General Conrad von Hötzendorf, the Head of the Staff—but not of General Schönaich, the Minister for War—would be glad, in the event of further complications arising in Albania, to seize the opportunity of compelling Turkey to surrender a small portion of the Sanjak to Montenegro, in return for which King Nicholas would allow a rectification of the Austro-Montenegrin frontier near Cattaro, carrying the same to the crest of the hills overlooking the bay. The military people here have for a long time past been anxious to secure the safety of Cattaro which is said to lie open to a bombardment from forts erected on the surrounding mountains. These ideas, which have leaked out, may have been the origin of the rumours, especially circulated in Servia, that Austria intends to reoccupy the Sanjak. I am perfectly certain that Aehrenthal will not give ear to any projects of this kind. I am told on good authority that Russian officers recently visited the Montenegrin forts above Cattaro, and that they found them to be quite useless in their present state, and that the guns in them were antiquated; in short, in their opinion the

Austrians have nothing to fear from these military works in their present condition. I have no doubt that Aehrenthal possesses the same information with regard to them, and as he holds King Nicholas by the annual subsidy which is paid to him by Austria, he is perfectly well aware that these fortifications will not be made a danger to the safety of Cattaro, and that therefore the rectification of the frontier is not a matter of urgent necessity. . . .⁽²⁾

Yours truly,

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

⁽²⁾[The omitted paragraphs refer in general terms to Austro-Hungarian relations with Germany and Servia, the Moroccan situation, Græco-Bulgarian relations, and to personal matters. They add nothing of importance to the subject of the present volume.]

[*ED. NOTE.*—The despatches of Mr. Akers-Douglas from Cetinje and of Sir G. Lowther from Constantinople during April and May refer to the progress of the fighting in Albania, but the information was often confused and conflicting, and it has not been thought necessary to reproduce these documents as they add little on the diplomatic aspect. On April 20, 1911, Mr. Akers-Douglas reported that "The news which excites the greatest interest here at present is that Shefket Turgut Pasha is to issue a proclamation giving the refugees in Montenegro a period of three days in which to return, in default of which they will be treated with the utmost severity of the law." (Despatch No. 6, D. April 20, 1911, R. April 27. F.O. 15627/14/11/44.) Six days later Mr. Akers-Douglas added information that this proclamation would be issued directly Turgut Pasha reached the disturbed district, and would be accompanied by another "to the effect that Albanian insurgents who had taken refuge in Montenegro and declined to return would no longer be treated as Ottoman subjects." (Despatch No. 7, D. April 26, 1911, R. May 3. F.O. 16505/14/11/44.)

During the same period Sir G. Lowther's correspondence and that of Sir F. Cartwright from Vienna make frequent reference to the question of the anti-Greek boycott which began again in full vigour towards the end of March. The representatives of the Powers made representations on the matter (*cp.* Sir F. Cartwright's telegram No. 40 of May 10, 1911, D. 7.30 P.M., R. 9.30 P.M. F.O. 17743/16650/11/19), but no result followed or was expected.]

No. 472.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 21683/14/11/44.

(No. 150.)

St. Petersburg, D. May 26, 1911.

Sir,

R. June 6, 1911.

The Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me yesterday of the communication which the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople had been instructed to make to the Porte with regard to the massing of Turkish troops on the Montenegrin frontier. Monsieur Tcharykow, His Excellency said, had called the attention of the Turkish Government to the possible dangers of the present situation, and had pointed out that the slightest incident might give rise to frontier conflicts of which it was impossible to foresee the consequences. He had further invited the Porte to declare categorically that she had no aggressive intentions so far as Montenegro was concerned.

In instructing their Ambassador at Constantinople to hold this language the Russian Government were animated by the desire to make it perfectly clear both to public opinion at home and to the many disturbing elements in the Balkans that they are firmly resolved to devote their every effort to securing the maintenance of peace. He did not believe that the Montenegrin Government cherished any bellicose designs against Turkey, nor could the military dispositions which they had taken be regarded in the light of a menace to that Empire, as they partook rather of the nature of precautionary measures for the protection of their frontier. The natural sympathy, however, felt by the Montenegrins for the Albanian cause might take a dangerous and active form, and the Government might find itself in presence

of a national movement which it would be difficult to control. It was therefore very necessary, he thought, that Turkey should lose no time in giving tranquillising assurances as to her pacific intentions.

As regarded the question of the guarantee asked for by the King, His Excellency expressed considerable doubts as to whether the Powers would be prepared to give such a guarantee, while it would be most difficult to find a formula which would meet with the approval of them all. He trusted that the Turkish reply to Monsieur Tcharykow's representations would prove satisfactory, and in that case it might be communicated to the Montenegrin Government, while the Powers might at the same time renew their counsels of moderation at Cetinje.

The action taken by the Russian Government meets with general approval in the press, whose sympathies are, as is natural, strongly on the side of Montenegro. The "*Novoe Vremya*" points out that in the event of war breaking out between Turkey and Montenegro nothing will prevent Bulgars, Serbs and Greeks from joining in; that this will mean a general conflagration; and that Russia therefore is rendering Turkey a friendly service in warning her against continuing on a course which may eventually lead to her being wiped out of the map of Europe.

The "*Rech*," while expressing the hope that the firm language held by Russia will rouse Turkey to a sense of the dangers attending its present policy, expresses regret that the Russian Government should have acted without first consulting England, France and Italy, as the weight of the Russian representations would have been trebled had they borne a collective character.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

No. 473.

Sir G. Louther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 21756/14/11/44.

(No. 374.)

Sir,

Constantinople, D. May 30, 1911.

R. June 6, 1911.

With reference to my telegram No. 125 of to-day's date,⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to transmit herewith French text⁽²⁾ of the statement made in the Chamber yesterday by the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject of the communication made to His Excellency by the Russian Ambassador regarding Turkey's attitude towards Montenegro.

In the course of this statement Rifaat Pasha accentuates the fact that the communication made was verbal and friendly in character that it was not the same as that published prematurely by the Petersburg Telegraphic agency and that the Russian Ambassador had expressed to His Excellency his regret at the misinterpretation which had generally been placed upon his amicable representations.

Rifaat Pasha added that the complaints of Montenegro were both illogical and misplaced, and declared emphatically that Turkey had no intention of making war on Montenegro; such a war would bring her no advantage, material or moral, besides being contrary to the pacific policy which Turkey desired to maintain towards all her neighbours; and His Excellency trusted that the assurances which he now made would confirm those already given to the Montenegrin Government by the Turkish Minister at Cetinje in dissipating any anxiety on the part of the Montenegrins.

The Grand Vizier followed Rifaat Pasha in a speech in which he likewise laid stress on the pacific intentions of the Government with regard to Montenegro,

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced, as the contents are given in greater detail in the despatch (F.O. 20879) 14/11/44.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.]

explained the necessity for concentrating troops on their frontier in order effectually to suppress the rising in Albania and expressed satisfaction at the loyalty displayed by the mass of the Albanian people and at the conviction entertained by the Great Powers that Turkey's policy was entirely pacific.

On the conclusion of these speeches the President of the Chamber read aloud a *takrir*⁽³⁾ signed by Seid Bey, head of the Committee of Union and Progress Party in the Chamber, proposing that a vote of confidence should be passed, in view of the above declarations. The opposition leader protested that there was nothing in the declarations to which anyone had demurred and that no vote was therefore required. But the majority carried their point, and 185 votes were given for the Cabinet out of a total of 182 Deputies who were present. 47 Deputies abstained, and the opposition members had many of them previously left the House.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

(3) [*i.e.*, a memorandum.]

No. 474.

Mr. Bux-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 22716/14/11/44.

(No. 62.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sofia, D. June 1, 1911.

R. June 12, 1911.

The step taken by Monsieur Tcharikoff, the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, relative to the revolt in Albania has caused considerable surprise in this capital.

Although it has been known for some time that the King of Montenegro has been placed in a difficult position, owing to the financial strain caused by the immigration of Albanian refugees into his small territory, it was not generally believed here that His Majesty would take steps to procure the intervention of any of the Great Powers in his favour at Constantinople.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me recently that he had received a despatch from Monsieur Arzenieff, the Bulgarian Minister at Cettigne [*sic*] to the effect that the King of Montenegro had endeavoured to persuade the Russian Minister in that Capital of the necessity of Russian representations being made at the Porte to curb Turkish action on the Turco-Montenegrin frontier. Mr. Gueshoff said that the King had informed Mr. Koloucheff that the feelings of his nation could only be with difficulty restrained. The spectacle of burning villages and the panorama of devastation, which were plainly to be seen from the environs of his Capital, were causing much excitement amongst the warlike Montenegrins. Should a Turkish irruption ensue—, war would be inevitable. According to the report of the Bulgarian Minister the language of His Majesty, strong as it was, failed to convince the Russian Minister of the necessity of his country making representations in the sense desired.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, who received his information some days ago, was naturally surprised to hear of the representations made by Monsieur Tcharikoff. He asked me my opinion of the reason of the Russian action. I replied that, as the King of Montenegro had found the Russian Minister obdurate, he had doubtless endeavoured, and it seemed successfully, to interest the Emperor of Russia personally in the matter through the Grand Duchesses.

Owing to the illness of M. Sazonow, there would probably be no one at the Ministry to combat His Imperial Majesty's wishes, when definitely expressed.

In support of this surmise it is reported here that the news of the instructions sent to the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople became known before His Excellency even had time to carry out the same.

Monsieur Tcharikoff is a cautious and far-sighted man. He is well-known in this Capital, where he has recently been staying on a visit of some weeks to his sister-in-law, and he left the impression of a determination to raise no unnecessary incidents and to diminish all difficulties. It will be noted that his personal action, as reported from Constantinople, tends in this direction; he has smoothed down the roughness of the message and it is understood that his words have been as conciliatory as possible under the circumstances and his manner quite urbane.

In support of the above contention I have the honour to report that Mr. Panas, the Greek Minister here, tells me that when Prince George was High Commissioner in Crete, His Royal Highness made a personal effort to arrange the Cretan question direct with the Czar. Mr. Panas was at that time Secretary-General at Athens and in close touch with Prince George. The latter informed him that the Emperor had had the whole Cretan question put before him and had instructed his Ministers to take such steps as were necessary to settle it according to the wishes of Prince George, who was not only a close and intimate friend of his, but to whom he was indebted for his life.

His Imperial Majesty was eventually, however, given to understand that the Cretan Question was of so complicated a nature and involved so many and so far-reaching interests that it was impossible to decide it in accordance with the wishes of any one Sovereign, or Government. M. Panas believed that the Emperor was much annoyed at the decision arrived at by his Ministers and that he would be only too anxious to seize such an opportunity as the present one for showing his power. It appears, however, more probable that he was talked over by the Grand Dukes, related by marriage with the Montenegrin Royal Family, to intervene in favour of Montenegro on this occasion.

Whatever may have been the cause of Russian action, the mere fact of her intervention in favour of Montenegro has given the Albanian Question, in so far as Bulgaria is concerned, an importance which it did not possess here, prior to this event.

The Russian Minister is surprised at the action taken by his Government, the more so as he was given to understand that M. Koloucheff had held out no hope whatever to the King of Montenegro of any action on their part at the Sublime Porte. M. Nekludow in discussing the matter with me rather laboured the point that as M. Tcharikoff had made representations to the Porte, it was a great mistake to tone down his action, firmness in [*sic*: ? dealing with] Orientals being all-essential.

The French Chargé d'Affaires who called upon me this morning, stated that his Government had been urged by the Russian Government to support her action at the Porte. They were placed in a difficult position, as there seemed to be no real cause at the present moment for such action. M. Bompard, however had been instructed to address a few words to Rifaat Pasha, so as to make a show of supporting their ally, but the words used were merely commonplace and "banal," and would be understood as such.

As far as is known here, Russian action has been practically isolated and is not likely to have any effect on Turkish action except to increase the determination of the Turkish Government to put a speedy end to the revolt.

A copy of this despatch will be sent to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople by next Messenger.

I have, &c.

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

MINUTE.

Neither Mr. Bax-Ironside nor the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t seems to have been aware of the message which King Nicholas gave to the Representatives of the Great Powers through the

German Minister at Cetinje asking that the Powers should guarantee Montenegro from an attack by Turkey. It was after the receipt of that message that the Russian Government decided to make representations to Turkey.⁽¹⁾

R. M.
12 6 11.
R. P. M.
L. M.

⁽¹⁾ [The message from King Nicholas in the above sense was reported by Mr. Akers-Douglas in his telegram No. 7 of May 22, 1911, D. 2.40 P.M., R. 5.10 P.M. (F.O. 19620/14/11/44). The Russian decision to make representations to Turkey was reported by Sir G. Buchanan in his telegram No. 117 of May 24, 1911, D. 8.15 P.M., R. 10 P.M. (F.O. 19980/14/11/44).]

No. 475.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir A. Nicolson

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Vienna, June 7, 1911.

. . . .⁽²⁾ When I mentioned the word "Albania" to Aehrenthal last week, he shook his head and said that things were not going well for the Turks in that part of their Empire. Aehrenthal had expected that by the end of May the insurrection would have been suppressed, but he was now afraid that it would drag on for some time to come. The obstinacy of the Turks in insisting on crushing the insurrection by force seemed to displease him, for he observed to me that when one was not able to take a fortress by storm, one could often get possession of it by gold. I enquired of him whether he was not afraid that when the Turkish forces came into contact with the Montenegrin frontier, incidents would occur which might lead to serious fighting between Turks and Montenegrins. He replied he did not believe that, however annoyed the Turks might be by the attitude of Montenegro, they would venture to attack that little country, for in the first place there was nothing to gain by doing so, and secondly, if they did, they knew that several European Powers would very likely interfere to protect Montenegro. Aehrenthal then alluded to the Russian recent "démarche" at Constantinople. He declared that in his opinion Russian diplomacy had been somewhat clumsy in its action, having first made a step forward, and then suddenly a step backwards. Nevertheless he thought that the premature publication of the severe form of the Russian "démarche" had had a wholesome effect upon the Turkish Government, and that the latter now realized that if they touched Montenegro, the Russian Government would be compelled by public opinion to take action for her protection. "None of us," said Count Aehrenthal, "desire to see Balkan affairs complicated by the outbreak of hostilities between Turkey and Montenegro," and I think he is not sorry that the main trouble of restraining Turkey from attacking Montenegro now devolves upon Russia and not upon this country. . . .⁽³⁾

Yours truly,

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. II of 1911.]

⁽²⁾ [The opening paragraphs of this letter are concerned with Court news.]

⁽³⁾ [The omitted paragraphs treat of the attitude of Austria-Hungary to the Albanian question, her relations with Bulgaria, the Moroccan situation, the General Arbitration Treaty between the United States and Great Britain, and minor affairs of general interest.]

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey

F.O. 22710/14/11/44.

(No. 89.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. June 8, 1911.

R. June 12, 1911.

I have the honour to report that public opinion here has for some time past shown a growing interest in the Turkish operations carried on against the insurgent Albanians on the Montenegrin frontier. The ill-success of the Turks, the stubborn resistance of the Malissori, the brutalities perpetrated by the soldiery who have been desecrating churches and burning houses coupled with the appeal of Montenegro to the Powers and the action of Russia at Constantinople have kept the Austrian Press fully occupied with the Albanian question. The clerical newspapers have been crying aloud against the apparent abandonment by Count Aehrenthal of Austria's right of protection of the Christian population in Albania and they have demanded that he should assume a stiffer attitude towards the new Régime at Constantinople.

The Marquis Pallavicini, who had the direction of the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office during the absence of Count Aehrenthal, more than once declared to me that he was convinced that the Albanian rebellion would not assume dangerous proportions and that it would soon be suppressed—in fact he asserted to me on more than one occasion that all would be over before the end of May. The end of May has come and Count Aehrenthal has returned to the Ballplatz to find the insurrection still in full swing and showing signs of being a matter of far greater importance than had been assumed by the Marquis Pallavicini. The action of Russia at Constantinople has also helped to make Count Aehrenthal realize that at any moment the Albanian question might cease to be a matter concerning Turkey alone and might be raised at any moment into one of international importance. Last week Count Aehrenthal spoke to me in rather strong terms about the stupidity of the Turkish Government, who refused to follow the friendly advice he had given them, namely to try and pacify the Albanians by endeavouring to meet their wishes in a reasonable spirit rather than to attempt to suppress the rebellion by bloodshed. Count Aehrenthal's one desire is to put an end to the continuance of hostilities so close to the Montenegrin frontier, as he foresees that should a serious incident arise between Turks and Montenegrins Montenegro is certain to make another desperate appeal to the Powers and that it would be very difficult for Austria-Hungary to close her ears absolutely to it. I know that Count Aehrenthal has over and over again given the advice to the Turkish Ambassador here that the Turkish Government should act with the greatest prudence in Albania but as these well-meant efforts seem to have led to little result he has found it advisable to publish a sharply worded warning in the semi-official *Fremdenblatt* this morning, addressed to the Turkish Government, the substance of which I have the honour herewith to embody for your information.

"The News from Albania is serious, and there is not much hope of peace in the near future. The constitutional Régime at Constantinople which could hardly have been initiated without the assistance of the Mussulmans of Albania turned against their country with unreasonable sharpness. The Albanians retorted with insurrection in the spring of 1910. The Turkish Government not content with a relentless suppression of the rebellion, pushed this work still further by a compulsory disarmament of a proud race which from all times has been accustomed to carry arms. This process was executed with such severity that our diplomacy was compelled to point out in a friendly manner to the Porte that they were alienating a race upon whose fidelity depended in a large measure the very existence of European Turkey. A fresh insurrection broke out in the spring of the present year and the Albanians again felt the iron fist of Torghut Pasha. Though it is evident that the Turkish Government were justified in employing force it is regrettable that their operations should have been

characterized with such brutality. The anxiety with which our Government has been watching recent events in Albania has only been too well justified by to-day's news. Just as Torghut Pasha had at last achieved some success against the insurgents, the Mirdites, who have hitherto kept aloof from the struggle, have broken into open rebellion. This may perhaps have the result of inducing the Turkish Government to see how disastrous their policy has been hitherto and at the same time to acknowledge the soundness of the advice which Austria-Hungary has repeatedly given at Constantinople to the effect that the Albanians were in need of very careful treatment and should not be subdued but rather conciliated. Co-operation with Albania and not constant warfare should be the aim of a sensible Turkish policy. Such advice however was not listened to in Constantinople in spite of the friendly manner and form in which it was tendered by our Government on different occasions. The lively interest with which public opinion in Austria-Hungary has followed the changing fortunes of Turkish policy in Albania gives evidence not only of our good feeling towards the Ottoman Empire but also of the well-known sympathies which we cherish for the Albanians of all three confessions. Austria-Hungary for a long time past has exercised a protectorate over the Catholics in Albania, but this has not prevented our Government from letting the Albanians know that they would be wise to subject themselves to legitimate authority and not to serve outside influences by continuing a struggle which would benefit others and not themselves. The language of Austria-Hungary at Constantinople has been formed on the basis that the Albanian question was a purely internal affair, but the sincere desire for the continuance of Turkey in Europe and our special sympathies for Albania justify our diplomacy in declaring its 'views on a policy which has led to an untenable situation.'

"The Neue Freie Presse of to-day's date contains a leading article on the subject of Albania conceived in similar terms. The article in the Fremdenblatt is warmly welcomed by the Christian Socialist and Clerical Press, which has long been urging the Austro-Hungarian Government to take energetic action in the matter.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

MINUTE.

The article in the Fremdenblatt was inspired directly by Count Aehrenthal.
See German Press comments on the Article in 22676 (1)

R. M.
R P M.
E. A. C.
June 17.
L. M.
A. N.
E. G.

(1) [Not reproduced, as it contains press comments only.]

No. 477.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Vienna, June 12, 1911.

F.O. 22903/14/11/44.

D. 1-50.

Tel. (No. 55.) Confidential.

R. 8-30.

French Ambassador has communicated to me confidentially 'substance of Tel[egram] from French Ambassador at Berlin stating that recent article in Vienna

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Rome (as No. 88); to St. Petersburg (as No. 158); to Paris (as No. 215); to Berlin and Constantinople by bag on June 13.]

"Fremdenblatt"⁽²⁾ has caused much annoyance and surprise at the Foreign Office there, where it is feared that it may indicate a new departure in Count von Aerenthal's Balkan Policy.

In my Tel[egram] No. 12 of February 19th⁽³⁾ I already reported that Count von Aerenthal was greatly dissatisfied with Young Turkish regime. Since that time I know he has sent repeated messages to Constantinople through the Turkish Ambassador here, advising prudence. Since Count von Aerenthal's return to Vienna he has expressed to me his strong disapproval of Turkish action in Albania. As Count von Aerenthal's warnings to the Turkish Government have had but little result I think that he intends the Fremdenblatt article to open the eyes of the Turkish Public to the dissatisfaction existing for some time past in Vienna at the conduct of the Turkish Government. I do not think that Count von Aerenthal intends to change materially his policy towards Turkey if he can possibly help doing so, but Turkey must not presume too much on his long-suffering patience, for no doubt great pressure is now being brought to bear on Count von Aerenthal from clerical quarters to make him take action in Albania.

All this seems to be ignored in Berlin where they only aim at pushing German financial interests at Constantinople, and Germany is annoyed whenever she discovers that Count von Aehrenthal holds the opinion that the Balkan question touches Austria more closely than Germany and that therefore Balkan Policy should be shaped in Vienna rather than in Berlin.

(2) [cp. immediately preceding document]

(3) [r *supra*, p. 253, No. 213.]

No. 478.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Vienna, June 14, 1911.

F.O. 23240/14/11/44.

D. 6.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 59.)

R. 8.30 P.M.

Albania.

Count Aehrenthal expressed himself to me to-day as very satisfied that Turkish Government, at the eleventh hour, had pulled up, and now shows a disposition to attempt to pacify Albania by means of granting concessions. In Count Aehrenthal's opinion it was most urgent now that if Powers wished for the maintenance of peace they should lose no time in bringing pressure to bear upon the King of Montenegro to prevent him from giving any further encouragement to the insurgents, and to make him use his influence with them to persuade them to accept Turkish terms, which Count Aehrenthal had every reason to believe would be reasonable. Count Aehrenthal was most earnest in impressing upon me the necessity that Powers should act promptly at Cetinje if peace is to be maintained, for he was informed that the King of Montenegro was inclined in underhand ways to encourage insurgents to continue rebellion for objects of his own. Count Aehrenthal has just sent an urgent telegram to the Austro-Hungarian Minister at Cetinje to act promptly and use his best efforts in this direction. Count Aehrenthal is evidently afraid that the King of Montenegro may prove obstinate and dissuade insurgents from accepting Turkish amnesty. Within ten days' grace, which I understand will be accorded to the

(1) [This telegram was sent to Berlin (as No. 102); to St. Petersburg (as No. 259); to Rome (as No. 83); to Constantinople (as No. 224); to Paris by post (as No. 224) on June 16. It was also sent to Cetinje.]

insurgents by the Turkish Government, Count Aehrenthal hopes that His Majesty's Government will use their influence at Cetinje in the cause of peace.

(Sent to Cetinje.)

MINUTES.

? Ascertain if Italian Gov[ernment] intend to take similar steps at Cetinje, and, if so, instruct Mr. Akers Douglas to support the representations of his Austro-Hungarian and Italian Colleagues.

R. M.
15/6/11.

I do not think that Mr. Akers Douglas should take any steps until *all* his Colleagues are instructed. We sh[oul]d certainly wait for France and Russia. We might tel[egraph] to Sir F. Cartwright, "Your tel[egram] No. 59. H[is] M[ajesty's] Ch[argé] d'Aff[aires] is being instructed to make the desired comm[unicatio]n to the King of Montenegro as soon as all his colleagues are authorized to do so."⁽²⁾ Tel[egraph] in similar sense to Mr. Akers-Douglas—and enquire of Paris and St. Petersburg whether they propose to instruct their R[epresentative]s at Cetinje.⁽³⁾

A. N.
E. G.

⁽²⁾ [This telegram was despatched to Vienna (No. 36), on June 16, the last few words being altered by Sir Edward Grey to "provided that the other Representatives of the six Powers are authorized to do so." It was repeated to Berlin (No. 104); to Rome (No. 85), to St. Petersburg (No. 261); to Constantinople (No. 226) and to Paris by post (No. 229). The corresponding telegram to Mr. Akers-Douglas was No. 19 of June 16, D. 6.0 p.m.]

⁽³⁾ [Further telegrams were despatched to Paris (No. 150), to St. Petersburg (No. 262)]

No. 479.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 23782/14/11/44.

(No. 414.) Confidential.

Sir,

Therapia, D. June 14, 1911.

R. June 19, 1911.

The press for the past few days has been continually repeating that the operations against the insurgents in Northern Albania have been brought to a successful conclusion, and Rifaat Pasha's language has been on similar lines, and it has even been stated that the Council of Ministers yesterday decided to instruct Torghut Pasha that further military operations must cease; yet it may be doubted whether from a military point of view the repression of the revolt has been so complete as we are asked to believe, while it certainly has not been carried so far as was at first intended. Whether the troops have the situation in hand so thoroughly as the official statements assert seems questionable, but on the other hand it is pretty clear that a considerable proportion of the reports in the foreign press have exaggerated the importance of the rebellion,—the alleged rising of the Mirdites, for instance, has turned out to be of comparatively of [*sic*] little importance,—and the movement appears to be collapsing. Be this as it may, there is a general consensus of opinion that it is politic to consider the revolt as practically ended and that the time has come to proclaim the inauguration of a new and milder policy, such as would have been quite impossible before the split in the Committee of Union and Progress had eliminated the chauvinist elements from the Government. But the main reason for this departure in the direction of conciliation is to be found in the warnings received from Europe.

In spite of the irritation produced by the unfortunate manner of its appearance, the Russian démarche⁽¹⁾ unquestionably produced a certain effect on the Turkish

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 454-5, No. 472.]

Cabinet, and when it was followed by the semi-official warning conveyed from Austria-Hungary by the "Fremdenblatt,"⁽²⁾ the Turks, ever sensitive to the public opinion of Europe, felt constrained at least to make a show of deferring to the advice tendered them. Whether the German Minister at Cetinje is right in believing that his Government was in no way concerned with the "Fremdenblatt" article, I am of course unable to say, but I could suggest more than one consideration which might perhaps have induced them to have inspired the action of Austria, and I feel sure that it is believed here that the Wilhelmstrasse was acting with the Ballplatz in the matter, and it was this conviction that lent the Austrian advice so much weight.

The moderate press here has, on the whole, taken the advice in good part, but the Committee organs have shown their usual ingenuity in interpreting the facts to suit their own views. As a sample I enclose articles from the "Jeune Turc" of the 13th, and the "Senine" (ex-"Tanine") of the 10th.⁽³⁾

For the present, however, the mot d'ordre is all in favour of a policy of moderation and conciliation in Albania and as an earnest of it, the Sultan's visit to Uscub, it is announced, is to be made the occasion to proclaim a general amnesty for the Albanians from which only some thirty chief offenders are to be excluded. Although as I have suggested above the change of policy has been decided on largely out of deference to European opinion, I believe that it is one which is in accordance with the real views of the present Cabinet, but it remains to be seen whether a line of conduct so out of tune with Oriental ideas can be successfully carried out. A policy of conciliation is long in bearing fruit, and in this particular case the mistrust sown in the minds of the Albanians by Torghut's breach of faith in resuming active operations before the expiration of the time he allowed them to reply to his conditions, if this charge was a true one, will make it doubly difficult to regain their confidence. Nor will the Albanians easily forget their burnt villages and starving families, the recollection of which is only too likely to be kept alive by the proceedings of the small columns of gendarmerie and troops which are to be employed to hunt down the scattered "brigands," who, the newspapers assure us, alone remain in arms against the Government.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

MINUTE.

Sir G. Lowther says that the Turks believe that the German Gov[ernmen]t supported, if they did not inspire, the action taken by the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t in regard to the article published in the Fremdenblatt, but the article in the "Jeune Turc" is to the opposite effect.

It seems that the amnesty is not to be of a general character, as thirty of the insurgent leaders are to be exempted from it. If this is true it will probably deter the others from accepting it.

R. M.
19/6/11.
R. P. M.
L. M.
A. N.
E. G.

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 459-60, No. 476.]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 480.

Tewfik Pasha to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 23390/14/11/44.

Londres, le 14 Juin 1911.

Chère Excellence,

R. June 15, 1911.

Vous sachant très occupé et ne voulant pas vous déranger, je vous remets ci-inclus un résumé de la décision prise par mon Gouvernement à l'égard des Malissaures bloqués par les troupes Impériales.

Je saisis, etc.

TEWFIK.

Enclosure in No. 480.

Statement communicated by Tewfik Pasha.

Un délai de dix jours est accordé à tous les Malissaures, et dans le cas où ils seraient rendus en remettant leurs armes à nos Autorités avant l'expiration de ce délai, aucune poursuite judiciaire ne sera dirigée contr'eux sous quelque forme que ce soit pour les actes ayant provoqué des opérations militaires.

Sa Majesté Impériale Le Sultan, dans Ses sentiments de haute générosité, a bien voulu en outre accorder 10.000 Livres Turques pour aider les Malissaures à réparer les dégâts inévitables causés par les opérations militaires, et que la population n'est pas en état de réparer elle-même.

Le Gouvernement Impérial adoptera aussi des mesures propres à assurer le bien-être et la prospérité de ces parages en tenant compte des conditions locales. Le Commandant de l'Armée d'opérations a reçu l'ordre de lancer une proclamation dans ces termes.

Toutes ces mesures d'ordre intérieur seront opportunes, espère le Gouvernement Impérial, pour ramener une population égarée et engager le Gouvernement Monténégrien à user de tous les moyens pour faire rentrer dans l'Empire et dans leurs foyers les réfugiés dont la présence sur son territoire motivait ses plaintes. Dans tous les cas ces mesures enlèveront toute justification et excuse au Gouvernement Monténégrien pour continuer des procédés équivoques employés jusqu'ici, et pourront servir de base à une action énergique et efficace des Puissances à Cettinje afin d'assurer la pacification définitive de toute la région.

La Sublime Porte a tout lieu d'espérer qu'avec les conseils de sagesse qui seront donnés à Cettinje, il ne restera plus trace de cette affaire.

Londres, le 14 Juin 1911.

MINUTE

The communiqué is not quite reassuring—especially as to delivery of arms. We had better simply ack[nowledge] and wait

A. N.
E. G.

No. 481.

Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

Berlin, June 17, 1911.

F.O. 23750/14/11/44.

D. 8.18 P.M.

Tel (No. 35.)

R. 9.50 P.M.

Your telegram No. 104 of 16th June⁽²⁾ and my despatch No. 174 of 16th June⁽³⁾: Albania.

Acting Secretary of State informs me that at the request of the Turkish Government he instructed German Minister at Cetinje to make a friendly but very earnest representation to the King to use his influence in the cause of peace.

I ventured to communicate to him instructions you have sent to Cetinje at Count Aehrenthal's suggestion. He thanked me and replied that a similar request had reached him from Vienna, but only after he had taken action. He remarked that his instructions to German representative were absolute and not dependent on action of other Powers, but it was a great satisfaction to his Government that we agreed with them in their efforts to maintain peace.

MINUTE.

Compare with 23743.⁽¹⁾ Mr. Akers Douglas's account of action taken by German Minister.

R. P. M.

L. M.

A. N.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Vienna (as No. 38); to St. Petersburg (as No. 268); to Rome (as No. 89); to Constantinople (as No. 230); to Cetinje (as No. 21); to Paris by bag.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 462, No. 478, *min.*, and *note* ⁽²⁾.]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced. It stated that the Porte was anxious for the co-operation of the Powers at Cetinje, to secure a peaceful attitude on the part of Montenegro. Germany had agreed to co-operate (F.O. 23817/14/11/44.)]

⁽⁴⁾ [*v. immediately succeeding document.*]

No. 482.

Mr. Akers-Douglas to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 23743/14/11/44.

Cetinje, D. June 17, 1911, 11.45 P.M.

Tel. (No. 20.)

R. June 18, 1911, 9 A.M.

Albania.

Your telegram No. 19 ()⁽²⁾ and my immediately preceding telegram ()⁽³⁾

Austrian Minister reminded the King that Montenegro had been constantly urged to observe strict neutrality, but that there were many indications of not having done so, and that His Majesty would incur grave responsibility if anything were done now to make matters worse or to encourage insurgents to make further resistance. He must have had hard things to say, for it seems that interview was rather stormy. The King said that he was very much hurt at the accusations which were made on all sides, and declared that he would maintain a perfectly correct attitude. He afterwards paid a friendly visit to the Austrian Minister. The latter tells me that he was not to suggest influencing the insurgents to submit.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Berlin (as No. 107); to Vienna (as No. 29); to Rome (as No. 88); to St. Petersburg (as No. 269); to Constantinople (as No. 231); to Paris, by bag.]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 461-2, No. 478, *min.*, and *note* ⁽²⁾.]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced. This telegram from Mr. Akers-Douglas, No. 19, D. June 16, 11 P.M., R. June 17, 8 A.M., informed Sir Edward Grey that the Austro-Hungarian and German Representatives had received similar instructions with regard to the proposed communication to King Nicholas. (F.O. 23627/14/11/44.)]

German Minister has telegraphed asking his Austrian colleague to make the same communication in his name. Italian Minister has so far only received instructions to renew strong counsels of calm and strictly correct attitude, which he will carry out at once. He thinks if a stronger joint communication were to be made it should be more or less identic and the form carefully considered; also that it would not be advisable to mention breaches of neutrality.

No. 488.

Mr. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 24699/14/11/44.

(No. 71.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sofia, D. June 17, 1911.

R. June 26, 1911.

The article in the "Fremdenblatt" of the 7th instant,⁽¹⁾ caused considerable surmise and much surprise in this Capital.

It is held that the warning conveyed to Turkey is of a much more serious nature than the Russian "Démarche,"⁽²⁾ creating, as it does, the impression of a right to interfere in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire.

The official Bulgarian Press has hitherto refrained from discussing Austrian action, but the organs which are free from political influence have not been so discreet. Generally speaking it may be stated that the article has created a favourable impression here, as any action of the Powers which is likely to cause annoyance to Turkey is bound to do.

Count von Aehrenthal has, it is considered, scored a diplomatic triumph, with skill and cleverness, in contradistinction to the clumsy action of the Russian Government. The comments on the "Fremdenblatt" article in the Turkish press, both official and otherwise, were so favourable in tone, considering the nature of the communication, that one can only arrive at the conclusion that Rifaat Pasha was aware of Austria's intentions. It seems quite probable that the Austrian Ambassador pointed out to His Excellency that the Turkish Government hold a trump card in their hands and ought to be able to play off the Albanian population against the Slavs of Macedonia: the former can be won over to remain faithful subjects of His Imperial Majesty, the latter never.

As matters stand at present it must suit Austria better for Albania to remain in subjection to Turkey than to have to deal with an autonomous Albania, although this may not be the case later. Apart, however, from the above reason, several others are apparent, any one of which might have caused Count von Aehrenthal to take the action he did. One is mentioned by His Majesty's Ambassador at Vienna in his telegram No. 54,⁽³⁾ wherein it is stated that the Archduke Francis Ferdinand urged the Austro-Hungarian Minister not to neglect the Albanian Catholics; another is to be found in the fact that such action would favourably affect the Reichstag Elections; again another that it shows the political world that Count von Aehrenthal has returned to his duties and that he is a force to be reckoned with; and finally, and this to my mind is the most important, it was meant to act as a warning to Italy and three of the Balkan States, viz: Bulgaria, Servia and Montenegro, that Austria had to be counted with.

Austria is as jealous of Italian influence on the Albanian coast as Italy is of Austrian on that littoral. Count Bosdari, whilst admitting this to me added, however, that Austria and Italy were such good friends that the former always consulted the latter prior to taking any important action, which would be likely to affect the future

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 459-60, No 476.]

⁽²⁾ [cp. *supra*, pp. 454-5, No 472.]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced, as the tenour is sufficiently indicated above. Tel. No. 54, from Sir F. Cartwright, of June 10. 1911, D. 1.50 P.M., R. 2.30 P.M. (F.O. 22605/9561/11/8).]

of Montenegro or Albania. I am not, however, of opinion that Italy was consulted on this occasion and I believe, and in this my Russian colleague agrees with me, that the article in question was meant to be considered as a warning by Italy.

Germany was not pleased either at the Austrian or Russian action, as may be gauged by the tones of the "Kölnische" and "Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung."

As to the general immediate result of the policy of the two Great Powers concerned, we may look forward to a temporary suppression of the Albanian Revolt, although we must expect a recrudescence within a year or so.

The "Status quo" is in a shaky condition, but the Sultan's visit will tend to quiescence, although from all accounts the Vilayets continue to be badly administered, and constant murders, assassinations and violence of all sorts are rampant.

Copies of this despatch will be sent by Messenger to His Majesty's Embassies at Constantinople and Vienna.

I have, &c.

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

No. 484.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

St. Petersburg, June 18, 1911.

F.O. 28749/14/11/44.

D. 3 P.M.

Tel. (No. 129.)

R. 5.30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 262 ().⁽²⁾

I made a communication as instructed to Russian Government yesterday.

In a memorandum just received in reply, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs states that on receipt of a communication from Turkish Ambassador here on the subject of "mesures de clémence" which the Porte was contemplating with regard to Albania, Russian Minister at Cetinje was instructed to call the attention of the Montenegrin Government to the "attitude favorable" of the Sublime Porte, and to invite Montenegrin Government to facilitate, on its part, the work of peace by abstaining from every sort of encouragement to the Albanians, and by persuading the latter to return to their homes. Memorandum then states that Russian Government have received no proposals from Count Aehrenthal on the subject.

Memorandum concludes as follows:—

"In view of the above, Imperial Government would be extremely grateful if His Majesty's chargé d'affaires at Cetinje, before making proposed communication to Montenegrin Government, would enquire of his Russian colleague result of steps already taken by the latter."

MINUTES.

We now know the attitude of all the Powers, in regard to the suggested representations at Cetinje, *except France*, though we only know of the Italian Gov[ernment]'s instructions to their Minister at Cetinje through Mr. Akers Douglas. See 28743.⁽³⁾

R. P. M.

R. M.

19/6/11.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Berlin (as No. 108); to Vienna (as No. 40); to Rome (as No. 89); to Constantinople (as No. 282); to Cetinje (as No. 23); to Paris by bag.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It was dated June 16, and instructed Mr. O'Beirne to inform the Russian Government that the British Chargé d'Affaires at Cetinje was to join in the desired communication to King Nicholas when the representatives of the other Powers were similarly authorised. (F.O. 28240/14/11/44.)]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 465, No. 482.]

Since this tel[egram] has been rec[eive]d Mr. Akers Douglas has tel[egraph]d result of Russian Min[iste]r's representations ⁽¹⁾ No action need therefore be taken on this tel[egram].

A. N.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately succeeding document.]

No. 485.

Mr. Akers-Douglas to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Cettinje, June 19, 1911.

F.O. 23968/14/12/44.

D. ?

Tel. (No. 21.)

R. 11.15 A.M.

Albania.

Russian Minister has expressed to the King of Montenegro necessity for prudent correct attitude and the hope that he would do his best to contribute towards the restoration of peace. His instructions had no reference to Austrian proposal. King replied that he was continuing to do his best he could not advise insurgents and did not know how far they would listen to him.

French Minister has not received any instructions.

King says that Albanians have been deceived before and he cannot take responsibility for advising surrender of arms unless some one guarantees their safety and the fulfilment of Turkish promises. But he would no doubt use his influence (which is said to be sufficient to stop insurrection) if invited by the Powers for he might consider this as a guarantee and he would gladly play a part in Albania. It is not however Austrian policy to let him do so.

Ismail Kemal says that he will not advise Albanians to submit unless guarantee and control are forthcoming from the Powers. I believe he has asked Austrian Minister to propose this to his Gov[ernment].

MINUTES.

The last paragraph is important, but it does not call for any action. The question before us is that of the Austrian proposal. The French and ourselves have alone said nothing to the King, we had better do what the French do

L. M.

I should doubt if any Power will give the guarantees asked for by the King—though he has good reason for soliciting them. We can wait for the French.

A. N.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Berlin (as No. 109); to Vienna (as No. 41); to Rome (as No. 92); to St. Petersburg (as No. 272); to Constantinople (as No. 233); to Paris by post.]

No. 486.

Mr. Akers-Douglas to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 24057/14/11/44.

Cettinje, D. June 19, 1911, 11 P.M.

Tel. (No. 22.)

R. June 20, 1911, 8 A.M.

King of Montenegro told me this morning that if any one of the Powers would give a guarantee he would persuade Malissori to surrender arms at once. Otherwise Albanian troubles would continue, for after previous experience they had no confidence in the Turks.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Constantinople; to Vienna (as No. 42); to St. Petersburg (as No. 273); to Rome (as No. 93); by post to Paris (as No. 235) and Berlin (as No. 136). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

MINUTE.

The position taken up by the King of Montenegro is very natural. I do not see how the Albanians can be expected to disarm and rely on Turkish clemency alone.

E. G.

No. 487.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, June 20, 1911.

F.O. 24176/14/11/44.

D. 7.52 P.M.

Tel. (No. 130.)

R. 9 P.M.

Montenegro.

My immediately preceding telegram (129 of June 18).⁽¹⁾

At a conversation which I had with the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day he explained that he thought that it would be desirable that, before making any communication to the King of Montenegro, His Majesty's chargé d'affaires at Cetinje should ascertain from the Russian Minister what reply the King had returned to the latter's representations. Apart from this, his Excellency quite concurred in advisability of His Majesty's chargé d'affaires urging the King to refrain from encouraging the Albanians to continue their resistance.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 467, No. 484.]

No. 488.

Mr. Akers-Douglas to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 24187/14/11/44.

Cetinje, D. June 20, 1911.

Tel. (No. 23.)

R. June 21, 1911, 8 A.M.

Albania.

French Minister has now received instructions to make a communication to the King of Montenegro after consulting his Russian colleague. I will therefore also make a communication in the sense of Russian Minister's (? official communication) which was as stated in tel[egram] No. 129⁽²⁾ from St. Petersburg and seems to me all that it is necessary or advisable at present. I presume that this will be in accordance with views of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment]. The King is absent from Cetinje until the day after tomorrow.

King replied to the Russian Minister's verbal communication by an autograph note, of which I have a copy.⁽³⁾ He says that clearly he cannot take the responsibility of advising the Albanian (group undecypherable) to return unless one or more Christian Powers undertook to see that the amnesty clauses are properly carried out.

Confidential. There would seem to be some difference between the original Austrian and German Proposals and the representations actually made here (see my tel[egram] No. 20,⁽⁴⁾ Sir F. Cartwright's Telegram No. 59⁽⁵⁾ and Tel. ? 35⁽⁶⁾ (from Berlin)). I understand that German Minister who is absent on leave has finally sent a short and somewhat curt note verbally through his Chancellor here merely requesting that Montenegro will observe strict neutrality.

(¹) [This telegram was sent to St. Petersburg (as No. 278).]

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 467, No. 484.]

(³) [*v. infra*, pp. 486-7, No. 506, *encl.*]

(⁴) [*v. supra*, pp. 465-6, No. 482.]

(⁵) [*v. supra*, pp. 461-2, No. 478.]

(⁶) [*v. supra*, p. 465, No. 481.]

A former Montenegrin Prime Minister and an Aide-de-Camp of the King have been sent to St. Petersburg and Vienna respectively, it is believed on a special mission.

MINUTES.

? As the French Minister has now received instructions from his Gov[ernmen]t to make a communication to the King of Montenegro after consulting the Russian Minister, Mr. Akers Douglas might be authorised to make a similar communication to that of his Russian and French Colleagues to King Nicholas on the latter's return to Cetinje.

R. M.

21/6/11.

R. P. M.

These minutes were written before the Dep[artmen]t saw your telegram of this morning to the 4 Powers.⁽⁷⁾

I do not see how we can now advise the King of Montenegro in the sense of the Russian communication as reported in 23749 ⁽⁸⁾

We have told the Powers that Mr Akers Douglas will be instructed to make the communication desired by Austria as soon as all of his colleagues receive similar instructions. But that communication involves advising Albanians to accept the Turkish terms.

Mr. A. Douglas might be instructed to speak somewhat in the sense of the first version (tel[egram] 23968)⁽⁹⁾ of Russian communication i.e. in quite general terms.

L. M.

On June 15 when we received the tel[egram] from Vienna⁽¹⁰⁾ we were ignorant of much which we have since learnt as to attitude of Albanians and scruples of Montenegro. We could tel[egram] to Mr. Akers Douglas as follows —⁽¹¹⁾

"Your tel[egram] No. 23.

You should tell the King of Montenegro verbally that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] are most anxious that peace should be preserved and that they feel sure that H[is] M[ajesty] will do his utmost towards that end."

You should confine yourself strictly to these words."

I think this sufficiently meets C[oun]t Aehrenthal's wish that "H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] will use their influence at Cetinje in the cause of peace"—and it does not ask for the impossible.

Mr. Akers Douglas should do this.

A. N.

We cannot do more, for we cannot honestly recommend the King of Montenegro to give advice to the Albanians, of which we doubt the safety in their own interest.

E. G.

⁽⁷⁾ [v. immediately succeeding document.]

⁽⁸⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 467, No. 484.]

⁽⁹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 468, No. 485.]

⁽¹⁰⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 461-2, No. 478.]

⁽¹¹⁾ [Despatched as No. 24 of June 21, 1911 (F.O. 24187/14/11/44).]

No. 489.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr T. Russell.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 24187/14/11/44.

Tel. (No. 43.)

Foreign Office, June 21, 1911.

D. 1.30 P.M.

You may inform M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] of substance of telegrams repeated to you from Cetinje and say that I do not see how the King of Montenegro or anyone can persuade Albanians voluntarily to give up their arms without some guarantee that when they are thus rendered defenceless the Turks will not take advantage of the situation to their detriment.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent also to Paris (No. 154); to St. Petersburg (No. 274); to Rome (No. 94). It was repeated to Berlin (No. 113) on June 24.]

Of course I see difficulty of giving or obtaining such guarantee: it is a matter in which only the Powers most nearly interested by geographical position or racial sympathy could take the initiative.

No. 490.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, June 23, 1911.

F.O. 24401/14/11/44.

D. 10 A.M.

Tel. (No. 132.)

R. 12.10 P.M.

June 22—Albania.

Your telegram No. 274 of 21st June.⁽¹⁾

I made a communication to-day to the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs as instructed. He considers it out of the question that any guarantee should be given to Albanians by any one Power. The only possible course would be some kind of guarantee by the six Powers jointly.

As a step in that direction the Powers might reply collectively to the recent circular from the Porte⁽²⁾ announcing the intended amnesty. In their reply they might take note of Turkish assurances, and state that they had already used their influence with the King of Montenegro in the cause of peace, and that if the Porte could give them some further and more definite assurances (with regard, perhaps, to reforms in Albanian administration) which they could lay before the Albanians as an argument in favour of submission, they (the Powers) would gladly make use of their (? influence) to endeavour to bring rebellion to an end.

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, though alive to the difficulty of inducing the Powers to join in his action, would willingly invite them to if you approved of suggestion.

Further, Acting Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs thinks that Turkish Government should endeavour to induce those Albanian chiefs who have already submitted to use their influence with the insurgents; and that the Porte might pacify the Albanians by promises of sufficiently large sums of money for rebuilding their homes. He has spoken in this sense to the Turkish Ambassador.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document and note ⁽¹⁾.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 464, No. 480, *encl.*]

No. 491.

Mr. Dering to Sir Edward Grey.

Rome, June 23, 1911.

F.O. 24403/14/11/44.

D. 2.45 P.M.

Tel. (No. 39.)

R. 4.30 P.M.

Albania.

Your tel. No. 94.⁽¹⁾

Secretary-General's opinion is that it will be difficult for any Power to give such a guarantee, even for Austria, Russia or Italy. He is personally rather opposed to idea, but will see M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] after which instructions will be sent to Italian Ambass[ado]r in London to discuss question with you.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 470-1, No. 489, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

MINUTE.

See views of Russian Government in 24401.(2)

L. M.

(2) [v immediately preceding document.]

No. 492.

Sn R. Paget to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 26767/26767/11/89.

(No. 44.) Confidential.

Belgrade, D. June 28, 1911.

Sir,

R. July 10, 1911.

With reference to my despatch No. 30 of April 27,⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to report that Monsieur d'Ugron, the new Austro-Hungarian Minister to Serbia arrived in Belgrade on the 18th instant, and presented his credentials to King Peter during the course of this week.

Prior to his departure from Vienna Monsieur d'Ugron had an interview with Count Aehrenthal at which, I hear on good authority, the latter expressed himself somewhat as follows: That the behaviour of Serbia towards Austria-Hungary had during the last two years been anything but satisfactory, that at one moment indeed he had very nearly reached the limit of his endurance and it had really only been owing to Count Forgach's unceasing efforts to smooth matters over that an acute crisis, with probably most disagreeable results to Serbia, had been averted. Curiously enough notwithstanding this fact most of the ill-will manifested against Austria had been ascribed directly to dislike of Count Forgach himself rather than to antagonism for the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and, Count Forgach's personality being now eliminated, he (Count Aehrenthal) desired to test the truth of this assertion; Monsieur d'Ugron would therefore, on his arrival in Belgrade, let bygones be bygones and adopt a wholly conciliatory and cordial tone; should the Servian Government show appreciation of this attitude and respond to it well and good but on the other hand should there be any sign of an intention on the part of the Servians to pursue the impertinences and provoking tactics of the past two years Monsieur d'Ugron would at once state to the Servian Government that Austro-Hungarian interests being paramount in these regions Austria is mistress and intends to remain so, that it is not in conformity with her dignity to submit to unnecessary annoyance from a small and unimportant country like Serbia and the Servian Government would therefore continue an aggravating policy at their own risk.

I am personally of opinion that hatred and distrust of Count Forgach have indeed in the past been to a great extent responsible for the friction between the two Governments and that a period of calmer relations may now be looked for especially as Monsieur d'Ugron appears tactful and the Servian Government are well aware that they are powerless against Austria. Unfortunately, however the inability of the Austrian Government to sufficiently disguise the fact in their dealings with Serbia that they mean to dominate her and that they regard her more as a dependency than an independent power is very trying to Servian amour-propre and is liable at times to goad Serbia into indiscretions.

I have, &c.

RALPH PAGET.

(1) [Not reproduced. It informed Sir Edward Grey that Count Forgach had been transferred to Dresden, and that M. Yovan Yovanović was to replace M. Spalaiković as Secretary-General at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. (F.O. 16112/868/11/92.)]

No. 493.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 25698/14/11/44.

(No. 173.)

St. Petersburg, D. June 23, 1911.

Sir,

R. July 3, 1911.

Having had the honour to receive your telegram No. 274 of the 21st instant⁽²⁾ I called yesterday on the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs. I communicated to His Excellency the substance of recent telegrams from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Cetinje to the effect that the King of Montenegro is unwilling to advise the insurgent Albanians to make their submission unless one or more of the Powers will guarantee that the Turkish promises will be fulfilled; and I read to him your telegram above referred to, in which you express the view that in the absence of some such guarantee it would be difficult for anyone to persuade the insurgents to surrender.

Monsieur Nératow began by expressing great doubts as to the possibility of affording the Albanians any kind of guarantee such as was suggested. He seemed to think that no one Power would put itself in the position of giving it. The only possible course was that something in the nature of a guarantee should be given by the Powers jointly.

I asked His Excellency whether, as a step in that direction, he thought it possible that the six Powers should jointly ask the Turkish Government to notify them of the terms which they were offering to the Albanians: the Powers could then take note of these terms and recommend the Albanians to accept them. Monsieur Nératow remarked that the Porte had already informed the Powers of their intentions towards the Albanians by a recent circular which, His Excellency informed me, they had addressed to the Turkish Representatives abroad. He thought that the Powers might perhaps return a joint reply to that circular, in which they might take note of the Turkish promises with regard to amnesty, &c. They might state that they had already urged the King of Montenegro to use his influence with the insurgents in the cause of peace, and they might add that if the Porte would furnish them with some further and more definite assurances which they could use as an inducement to the insurgents to make their submission, they would be prepared to use them in that way. The further assurances which Monsieur Nératow had in his mind might be in reference, among other matters, to the future administration of Albania; but he is anxious to avoid any language which would savour of interference in Turkish internal affairs.

I asked whether His Excellency would be prepared to take the initiative in proposing to the Powers the course here indicated, and he said that he would do so if you approved of the suggestion. I need not add that he is quite alive to the difficulty of inducing the six Powers to adopt it.

With reference to your telegram No. 280 of the 22nd instant,⁽³⁾ which reached me yesterday evening, I have the honour to state that during the conversation reported above I had already informed the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of the terms of the communication which His Majesty's chargé d'affaires was instructed to make to the King of Montenegro.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

⁽¹⁾ [Mr. O'Beirne's telegram No. 132 of June 23, D. 10 A.M., R. 12.10 P.M., gave a summary of the contents of this despatch. *v. supra*, p. 471, No. 490.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 470-1, No. 489, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced. It instructed Mr. O'Beirne to make the above communication. (F.O. 24176/14/11/44.)]

MINUTES.

M. Nératow changed his point of view on learning that the Turkish Minister at Cettinje had entered into negotiations with the Insurgents. See later despatch 25699 ⁽¹⁾

R M
4/7/11.

What would it avail "to take note" of Turkish assurances or to ask them for further assurances when C[oun]t Aehrenthal admits that no reliance can be placed on such assurances?

A. N.
E. G.

(⁴) [*v. infra*, pp. 477-8, No 499] ♦

No. 494.

Sir Edward Grey to Count de Saks.

F.O. 24187/14/11/44.
Tel. (No. 114.)

Foreign Office, June 24, 1911.
D. 3·7 P.M.

My telegram No. 43 to Vienna.⁽¹⁾

If the M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] should mention the subject of Albania, you may inform him of the substance of the telegram referred to above, pointing out that I am fully aware of the difficulty of doing anything, but that the alternative of doing nothing may lead to a situation in the Balkans that may be very disagreeable.

(¹) [*v supra*, pp. 470-1, No. 489.]

No. 495.

Mr. Akers-Douglas to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Cettinje, June 24, 1911.

F.O. 24625/14/11/44.
Tel (No. 26.)

D. ?
R. 9·45 P.M.

Albania.

Yesterday the King summoned all the foreign representatives to a meeting, at which we found also two princes and two generals.

His Majesty said that he wished our Governments to know that he was entirely pacific, and that the proof of this was his toleration of the presence of Turkish troops on his territory, particularly at Yezeski Vrh.

The King then turned to the amnesty. The Turkish Minister declared that the facilities⁽²⁾ promised by the Vali of Scutari in the protocol last year held good, though not mentioned in the proclamation. The King proposed that he should go and explain this to the refugees and insurgents. Turkish Minister agreed and has gone to Podgoritzza, arrangements being made for some insurgent chiefs to cross the frontier and meet him at Turkish consulate. I do not think that he is authorised by his Government to give a written undertaking, and it is not probable that his assurances will be accepted without some guarantee.

(¹) [This telegram was sent to Constantinople (as No. 239); to Rome (as No. 101); to Vienna (as No. 45); to Berlin (as No. 116); to St. Petersburg (as No. 287).]

(²) [Marginal note by Mr. Mallet: "Presumably those mentioned on p. 28 of annexed print." *v. immediately following Ed. note.*]

[ED. NOTE.—The reference in Mr. Mallet's marginal note to the immediately preceding document is probably to p. 28 of a volume of *Confidential Print* for South-Eastern Europe for November–December 1910. A report from Vice-Consul Summa at Scutari of October 17, 1910, there gives the grievances which had caused the recent emigration to Montenegro (F.O. 371/1000. 40438/926/10/44). A subsequent report from Vice-Consul Summa of December 16 is quoted in a despatch from Consul-General Lamb to Mr. Marling, No. 168 of December 28, 1910, forwarded to Sir Edward Grey on December 31. (F.O. 881/14/11/44). This states that assurances had been made by the Turks with reference to the grievances mentioned above. These were described as follows —

- “1 Reconstruction, at the Government expense, of the thirteen houses of refugees from Holti which had been burned by the troops;
- 2 Compensation for all cattle and other property confiscated,
- 3 Reduction of the cattle-tax;
- 4 Reduction of the term of military service; and
- 5 Appointment of non-Musulman officials in the districts where the population is mainly Catholic.”

It was stated, however, that the versions of these concessions current in Cetinje and Scutari varied.

The list of “assurances” given above appear to be those referred to by Mr. Akers-Douglas as the “protocol” of “last year.” The text of the “proclamation” with which he compares them was sent to Sir Edward Grey by him in his despatch No. 15 of June 20, 1911. It was issued by Shefket Turgut on June 5/18. The text, as given by Mr. Akers-Douglas is a French translation of the Albanian version, and Mr. Akers-Douglas states in his covering despatch that there “must be more than one version.” The text given is as follows (F.O. 25725/4/11/44) —

“Le Gouvernement Ottoman depuis son origine s'est appliqué à traiter avec clémence et bonté tous ses sujets sans distinction de race et de religion. Ainsi, à la suite d'un ordre Impérial de S[a] M[ajesté] le Sultan, un délai de dix jours à partir du 5/18 Juin a été accordé aux Malissors qui se sont revoltés les armes à la main contre leur gouvernement légitime. Ceux des Malissors qui, appréciant la valeur de ces intentions pleines de modération et de bonté, s'empresseront à se livrer et remettre les armes seront accueillis et aucune poursuite n'aura lieu contre eux pour leurs faits passés qui ont provoqué l'expédition militaire. En outre avec la somme de L.T. 10,000 que la Personne Sacrée de S[a] M[ajesté] fera gracieusement et miséricordieusement don, les maisons et édifices brûlés pendant les opérations militaires seront reconstruits et réparés. En même temps le Gouvernement prenant en considération les besoins des localités habitées par eux et les pertes causées par les derniers événements prendra les mesures nécessaires pour assurer leur bien-être et félicité.

Par conséquent le recours en grâce de ceux qui se livreraient dans l'espace du délai sus-indiqué sera accepté, et ceux qui après l'expiration de ce délai continueraient à s'obstiner et résister poursuivis dans leurs refuges sur la frontière seront nécessairement exterminés et annihilés.

Il est bien entendu que ceux qui se trouvant actuellement dans le Monténégro n'auraient pas recours dans le délai précité ne jouiront pas de ces bénéfices.

Pour se conformer en conséquence cette proclamation a été faite le 5 Juin 1911 [1911].

Le Commandant des forces de Skutari.
(signé) SHEFKET TORGHOUT.”]

No. 496.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 24401/14/11/44.

Tel. (No. 282.)

Foreign Office, June 24, 1911.

Your telegram No. 132.⁽²⁾

Of course practical and political objections to anything in the nature of a guarantee being given by one Power alone are overwhelming. An understanding therefore between Powers is essential, especially in the first place between Russia and Austria, who could associate Italy with them. Our support would then certainly be forthcoming to their efforts to keep the peace and I do not suppose either France or Germany would or could refuse their support.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 160).]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 471, No. 490.]

Situation seems to grow more serious daily and I doubt whether it can be saved by anything short of combined influence of the Powers; the first essential to this is a cordial understanding between the Powers most nearly interested in the preservation of peace in the Balkans.

You should inform acting M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] of my view and of substance of my conversation with Austrian Ambassador recorded in my tel[egram] No. 44⁽³⁾ to Vienna and ask him whether it will be agreeable to Russia if I pursue this line at Vienna.

I would gladly support a step such as acting M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] suggests he might take, but it would be well for him before approaching Powers generally to make sure that Austria shares his view.

(³) [*v.* immediately succeeding document, and *note* (¹).]

No. 497.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. T. Russell.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 24848/14/11/44.

Tel. (No. 44.)

Foreign Office, June 24, 1911.

Austrian Ambassador informs me that Count d'Aehrenthal shares my view that Malissori are unlikely to make submission, though he is not quite hopeless of a peaceful solution; he thinks however that assurance to Albanians would be rejected by Turks as an interference with their internal affairs and resentment felt by them might make situation still worse. Therefore he thinks this method undesirable though he admits difficulty of the situation.

I said it was obvious that assurance could not be given without an understanding amongst the Powers and communication with the Turks to whom it would have to be explained in advance as the only method of preserving the peace. Effect of it would depend upon whether all the Powers were united and serious. An understanding between Russia Austria and Italy was the first essential. Unless they saw eye to eye there appeared to be nothing possible except to let matters take their course, thus risking war between Turkey and Montenegro, that would create a storm in the Balkans and a very disagreeable situation.

Mr. Akers Douglas had made a representation at Cetinje urging Montenegro to keep the peace, but none of these diplomatic moves unsupported by anything else could be expected to induce Albanian insurgents to make submission to extent of surrendering their arms.

(¹) [This telegram was repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 281); to Paris (No. 159); to Rome (No. 97); to Berlin (No. 112).]

No. 498.

Sir Edward Grey to Count de Salis.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 24519/14/11/44.

Tel. (No. 115.)

Foreign Office, June 26, 1911.

H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] have received a petition from the Chiefs of several Albanian tribes in revolt to bring their case before the Powers.⁽²⁾ The petition begs for a local autonomy within the Turkish Empire. I consider that in the interests

(¹) [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 163); to St. Petersburg (No. 286); to Rome (No. 100); to Vienna (No. 45).]

(²) [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated in the minutes written on receipt of the petition (*v.* *Ed. note* immediately following) and in the telegram given above.]

of peace it is desirable that the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t should express their readiness to meet the wishes of the Albanians in respect to the language and school questions as well as regards sums being devoted to improvement of communications: and that they should declare a general amnesty without any exceptions and engage that no harm will befall those who surrender their arms. Unless the Powers can obtain some such assurances it will be impossible for them to use their influence to bring rebellion to an end or to avert the serious consequences that may arise from its being prolonged. H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t would be ready to instruct their Rep[resentati]ve at Const[antino]ple in the above sense if the other Powers agree to send similar instructions. 'You should ask the Gov[ernmen]t to which you are accredited what they are prepared to do.

[ED. NOTE.—The petition from the Chiefs of the Albanian insurgents was dated June 12, 1911, and received by Sir Edward Grey on June 24. (F.O. 24519/14/11/44.) The following minute was written upon it, and led to the despatch of the telegram given above as the immediately preceding document:—

MINUTE.

This is a request to H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t to communicate to the Powers the prayer of the Albanians to be permitted to enjoy a wide autonomy within the Turkish Empire. The signatories abandon any claim to independence. The statement of the case is moderately put. We have already acted to a certain extent in the direction desired, as we are in communication with the Powers: but our proposals hitherto have been limited to an endeavour to induce the Powers to obtain guarantees of non-molestation in the event of the Albanians surrendering their arms. We might go a step further and suggest that the Porte should be asked to give assurances that the amnesty will be general and that the requests of the Albanians in respect to the language and school questions as well as to improvement of communications be granted. The fact that the Albanians have addressed a petition to H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t is public property and we need not therefore conceal it, though it is possible that Austria and others may not be too well pleased that the Albanians have appealed to us and may therefore be a little lukewarm.

I would suggest a telegram to our Amb[assador]s at Paris, St. Petersburg, Rome, Vienna and Berlin.

A. N.
E. G.]

No. 499.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 25699/14/11/44.

(No. 179.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. June 26, 1911.

R. July 3, 1911.

I have the honour to state that I called to-day by appointment on the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs and made to him a communication as instructed by your telegram No. 282 of the 24th instant.⁽²⁾

Monsieur Nératow expressed his thanks to you for your message, but said that the situation had undergone so complete a change in the last days that he thought it would be well to await developments before making any further move. He considered that the circumstances under which an interview had been arranged between the Turkish Minister at Cettinje and the Albanian chiefs—that is to say by the good offices of the King and after a meeting of the Representatives of the Powers at Cettinje⁽³⁾—put King Nicholas entirely *hors de cause* in the matter of the

⁽¹⁾ [Mr. O'Beirne's telegram No. 134 of June 26, 1911, D. 7-58 P.M., R. 8-30 P.M., gave a summary of the contents of this despatch. (F.O. 24898/14/11/44.)]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 475-6, No. 496.]

⁽³⁾ [cp. *supra*, p. 474, No. 495.]

Albanian insurrection. The Turks were now in direct relations with the Albanians, and if they could not come to terms with the chiefs that was their own affair. The danger of Montenegro being drawn into the conflict—which had been the chief source of preoccupation to Russia—had, His Excellency thought, been averted for the present.

I said that the chiefs had not yet so far as we knew accepted the Turkish terms, and that if they refused to accept them without a guarantee from the Powers, and if the struggle continued, and the Albanian refugees remained in Montenegro, the difficulties of the situation would remain much as before. Monsieur Nératow replied that at any rate the Turks could not now throw the blame for what occurred on the King of Montenegro, and indeed His Excellency made it clear that so long as there was no fear of an attack by Turkey on Montenegro the continuance of the Albanian insurrection did not cause him any great concern.

I asked His Excellency whether apart from the question of taking any immediate further steps, the line which you had adopted in your conversation with the Austrian Ambassador as recorded in your telegram No. 44 to Vienna of the 24th instant,⁽⁴⁾ met the views of the Russian Government. He replied in the affirmative, saying that the Russian Government quite concurred that there must be agreement between Russia and Austria in regard to concrete questions arising in the Balkans before any joint action could be taken by the Powers. I remarked that at the time of the exchange of views between Monsieur Iswolsky and Count d'Aehrenthal at the beginning of 1910⁽⁵⁾ the two Powers had laid down certain principles with regard to the Balkans question and Count d'Aehrenthal had agreed that if occasion arose they might lay their views in the matter before the other four Powers. Monsieur Nératow assented, and said that quite recently the Austrian Ambassador had approached him on the subject of the Albanian insurrection and that he had expressed his willingness to come to an understanding on the subject with Austria. I thought, however, that His Excellency spoke of any understanding with Austria in a rather perfunctory manner and with little cordiality or enthusiasm. He remarked that Russia "if asked to do so" was willing to endeavour to come to an understanding; but he certainly showed no inclination to make any advances. The opening of negotiations between the Turkish Minister and the Albanian leaders seems, in fact, to have deprived the Russian Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of any disposition to move in the Albanian question for the moment.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

⁽⁴⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 476, No. 497.]

⁽⁵⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 107-73, Chapter LXXII, *passim*]

No. 500.

Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 25108/14/11/44.

Tel. (No. 39.)

Albania.

Berlin, D. June 27, 1911, 9.50 P.M.

R. June 28, 1911, 8 A.M.

I have communicated to S[ecretary] of S[tate] for F[oreign] A[ffairs] substance of your telegram No. 115.⁽²⁾

He replied that he was entirely in accord with the object which you desired to attain but that he felt considerable hesitation as regards means proposed. As we

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Vienna; to St. Petersburg; to Rome; by post to Paris.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 476-7, No. 498.]

were well aware, German Gov[ernmen]t had never been much in favour of action by the Powers with regard to Turkey's internal affairs. The system had not yielded good results in Macedonia and they were most unwilling to recommence anything of the kind. Moreover collective action might only make things worse, rendering the Turks recalcitrant and increasing the pretensions of the Albanians and Montenegrins.

He begged me to treat his remarks as unofficial. He wished to think over the terms of his definite answer which he would give me tomorrow.

I replied in the sense of your tel[egram] No. 114⁽³⁾ that you were fully aware of the difficulties of doing anything but felt still more strongly the objection to allowing the present situation to continue.

MINUTE

This reply was to be expected. I would not repeat this, as we are to have an official answer.

L. M.
A. N.
E. G.

(³) [*v. supra*, p. 474, No. 494.]

No. 501.

Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Berlin, June 28, 1911.

F.O. 25261/14/11/44.

D. 6.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 40.)

R. 7.30 P.M.

Albania. My telegram No. 39 ()⁽²⁾

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has made the following communication to me:—

“German Government share views of British Government that the situation in Albania gives cause for anxiety, and that termination of rebellion is desirable in the interests of peace. They have repeatedly advised neutrality at Cettinjë and moderation at Constantinople, and will continue their efforts.

“Sir E. Grey now proposes collective representations to obtain concessions to the Albanians from the Porte as regards language and school questions, improved communications, and complete amnesty for rebels. German Government fully appreciate that the proposal is based on good grounds tending to preserve peace, but consider that it constitutes an interference in internal Turkish affairs, which would be felt by the Porte to be a revival of the policy of intervention which died out with the old régime. They hesitate to co-operate in inaugurating afresh this policy, and cannot but fear that collective intervention of the Powers at the present moment would reanimate unruly elements in Albania, and would increase difficulties of Turks in carrying out conciliatory measures they have loyally commenced.

“For these reasons the Imperial Government does not consider itself able to take part in (group undecypherable) collective action at Constantinople.”

(¹) [This telegram was sent to Vienna (as No. 50); to Rome (as No. 106); to St. Petersburg (as No. 298); to Paris by bag. Also to Cettinjë (as No. 36); to Constantinople (as No. 246) with the addition of words “the above is Confidential.”]

(²) [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

MINUTE.

The alternative is to let things drift with the serious risk of compelling much more disagreeable intervention later on. It is only too usual for the Powers to prefer this sort of alternative, but the knowledge that diplomatic intervention has been discussed and the Austrian pressure may pull things round.

M. G.

No. 502.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 25702/14/11/44.

(No. 183.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. June 28, 1911.

R. July 3, 1911.

I had the honour to receive yesterday morning your telegram No. 286 of the previous day,⁽²⁾ and as the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs found it difficult to give me an appointment I addressed to him the *aide-mémoire* of which a copy is enclosed conveying to him your proposal for concerted action by the Powers at Constantinople in the Albanian question. I have the honour to enclose copy of a letter which I received the same evening from Monsieur Nératow, to the effect that he doubted whether the Albanians would be satisfied with the concessions from Turkey which you specified since they apparently asked for local autonomy, but that he would not decline to join in the proposed action at Constantinople if the Powers were all at one on the subject.

I called on His Excellency to-day and thanked him for his letter. He again expressed his doubts as to whether the Albanians would be content with assurances on the points enumerated in your proposal. I said that the demands of the Albanians in regard to "autonomy," from the accounts which had appeared in the papers, did not seem very formidable. They amounted to demands that the lower officials, police, &c., should be Albanians, while the higher officials were Turks. Monsieur Nératow observed that if a local administration of this kind was conceded to Albania it would very soon be claimed in Macedonia also.

I asked His Excellency whether he had any indications as to the dispositions of Austria. He said that the Austrian Ambassador, who had been to see him that afternoon, did not appear to be yet aware of your latest proposal. From recent conversations however which he had had with Count Thurn he had derived the impression that the Austrian Government were willing to concert with Russia and Italy and also he supposed with the other Powers on the Albanian question but that they thought that, in the frame of mind now prevailing at Constantinople, any action of the Powers which was of the nature of an interference in Turkish internal affairs would serve only to provoke irritation in Turkey and would not tend to improve the situation.

I said that Austria might discourage joint action by the Powers, but that the inspired articles which had recently appeared in the Austrian press seemed to show her intention to take some action herself if the Albanian insurrection continued. Monsieur Nératow replied that he did not believe that Austria would take any direct action other than diplomatic. She would not take up arms on behalf of the Albanians. The only danger of Austria-Hungary bringing about a general conflict was that she might instigate Montenegro to go to war, and then intervene herself. Russia for her part was doing her best to prevent Montenegro from becoming embroiled.

⁽¹⁾ [Mr. O'Beirne's telegram No. 187 of June 29, 1911, D. 8.21 P.M., R. 9 P.M., gave a summary of the contents of this despatch. (F.O. 25260/14/11/44.)]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 476-7, No. 498, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

I asked Monsieur Nératow whether he did not agree that joint action of the Powers at Constantinople such as you proposed offered the best chance of avoiding further complications in the Balkans; and to this he assented.

I then asked His Excellency for some information in regard to the mission of the Montenegrin statesman Miushkovitch, who has just arrived in St. Petersburg from Cetinje.⁽³⁾ Monsieur Nératow said that Miushkovitch had laid before him the difficulties of the situation in which Montenegro was placed. There were thousands of Albanian refugees in Montenegrin territory, almost entirely women and children. The Montenegrin Government could not drive these people back into Turkish territory at the point of the bayonet. On the other hand, the financial burden of supporting them would soon become greater than Montenegro could bear. It would then, Monsieur Nératow thought, become necessary for the Powers to intervene in order to extricate the kingdom from an intolerable situation.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

Enclosure 1 in No. 502.

Aide-mémoire communicated to M Nératov.

St.-Petersbourg, le 14/27 juin, 1911.

Les chefs de plusieurs tribus albanaises insurgées ont adressé une supplique au Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique, le priant de porter leur cas devant les Puissances. Les Albanais demandent par cette requête qu'une autonomie locale leur soit accordée dans l'Empire Turc.

Sir Edward Grey est d'avis qu'il serait à désirer dans les intérêts de la paix que le Gouvernement Ottoman s'exprime prêt à faire droit aux désirs des Albanais en ce qui concerne les questions d'écoles et de langue ainsi que les sommes à appliquer à l'amélioration des voies de communication; qu'une amnistie générale soit proclamée sans aucune exception, et que la Sublime Porte se porte garant que ceux qui mettent bas les armes ne souffriront aucun tort. A moins que les Puissances n'obtiennent quelques assurances de ce genre elles se trouveront dans l'impossibilité d'exercer leur influence pour amener la fin de la révolte et pour éviter les conséquences sérieuses qui pourraient se produire si la révolte se prolongeait.

Le Gouvernement Britannique serait prêt à donner au Représentant d'Angleterre à Constantinople des instructions dans le sens indiqué ci-dessus si les autres Puissances sont d'accord pour faire parvenir des instructions analogues à leurs représentants.

Enclosure 2 in No. 502.

M. Nératov to Mr. O'Beirne.

Cher Monsieur O'Beirne,

St.-Petersbourg, le 14/27 juin, 1911.

En réponse à l'aide-mémoire que vous avez bien voulu me faire parvenir au sujet d'une supplique adressée par des Albanais au Gouvernement Britannique, je m'empresse de vous communiquer que nous n'avons pas reçu de supplique albanaise. Mais, d'après les télégrammes des journaux, il s'agirait d'une demande d'autonomie pour l'Albanie.

Sir Edward Grey semble vouloir restreindre la question aux limites de réformes en matière d'écoles, de langue officielle, de voies de communication ainsi qu'à l'amnistie générale.

Tout en étant sympathique à l'idée de contribuer dans la mesure du possible au rétablissement de la paix à l'intérieur de la Turquie (il ne s'agit que de l'Albanie proprement dite), je suis porté à croire que le Gouvernement Ottoman se tient déjà

(³) [*cp. infra*, p. 487, No. 507.]

pour obligé à exécuter les réformes en grande partie mentionnées dans l'aide-mémoire de l'Ambassade. Mais les Albanais se déclareront-ils satisfaits? Voilà ce qui est fort douteux, encouragés qu'ils sont par la presse européenne. Dans leur supplique ils demandent, paraît-il, beaucoup plus.

Néanmoins je ne m'opposerai pas à une démarche à faire à Constantinople, si toutes les grandes Puissances sont d'accord.

Je vous serai donc bien reconnaissant de m'avertir de l'accueil fait à la négociation actuelle par les autres Cabinets pour donner les instructions nécessaires à notre Ambassadeur à Constantinople.

Votre sincèrement dévoué,
A. NERATOW.

MINUTE.

The reply of the Albanian Chiefs to the Turkish Proclamation which has just arrived from Cettinje and is now being printed certainly goes much further than the moderate demands put forward in the petition addressed by the Malissor leaders to Sir E. Grey, and contains demands which the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t could hardly be expected to concede.

The Russian Gov[ernmen]t is evidently disinclined to propose an understanding with the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t (see 25699)(¹) whose policy she distrusts.

R. M.
4/7/11.
L. M.
A. N.
E. G.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 477-8, No. 499.]

[*ED. NOTE.*—The Turkish proclamation to which Mr. Macleay refers in the above minute is quoted *supra*, p. 475, *Ed note*. The petition addressed to Sir Edward Grey by the Albanian chiefs is mentioned in another *Ed. note, supra*, p. 477. The demands contained in the Albanian reply to the Turkish proclamation are detailed in the following extract from the reply itself:—

I. Garantie contre la répétition et reprise à l'avenir des procédés et actes anticonstitutionnels de la part du Gouvernement central et des autorités locales dans toute l'Albanie. Respect pour toutes les religions les coutumes et traditions garantis par la Constitution et consacrés par les lois et usages.

II. Reconnaissance de l'existence nationale des Albanais aux mêmes titres et avec les mêmes droits que les autres nationalités de l'Empire.

III. Liberté absolue pour les Albanais d'élire sans aucune entrave ni restriction les députés dont le nombre serait proportionnel à la population.

IV. Pleine et entière liberté pour les Albanais de s'instruire et de se développer dans leur propre langue et de fonder des écoles privées et publiques jouissant des mêmes avantages et privilèges que celles de l'état. Respect du droit reconnu aux chefs spirituels des différentes rites chrétiens quant à l'enseignement dans les écoles dépendant d'eux.

V. Organisation de l'administration des Vilayets habités par des Albanais, ayant pour un base un système de décentralisation administrative répondant aux besoins du pays et aux aptitudes des habitants et conciliant les règles générales de l'administration prévues par la Constitution avec les pratiques consacrées par le temps dans certains régions.

VI. Choix des Valis et autres hauts fonctionnaires parmi les plus distingués et capables fonctionnaires d'Etat en donnant la préférence à ceux qui connaissent la langue et les habitudes des pays albanais. Nomination des autres employés civils financiers et juges parmi ceux d'origine albanaise, qui possèdent les qualités et connaissances requises. Recrutement des gendarmes et agents de police ainsi que des employés électifs parmi les plus capables des habitants de la localité.

VII. Nomination d'un représentant du Sultan comme inspecteur général pour une certaine période d'années avec mission de veiller à l'application fidèle de la loi organique et à l'accomplissement des devoirs des Valis et autres fonctionnaires et au maintien de l'ordre et de l'harmonie entre les différents éléments ethniques établis dans les mêmes Vilayets.

VIII. Usages de la langue du pays pour les communications entre les administrés et les administrateurs locaux et pour les débats et les plaidoiries dans les tribunaux locaux à côté du turc qui est et demeure la langue officielle du Gouvernement.

IX. Service militaire obligatoire pour tous les albanais avec le système de cantonnement régional en temps de paix et une organisation spéciale pour les habitants des régions limitrophes des Etats Balkaniques leur accordant la facilité de faire leur service sur le lieu et assurant du

même coup la surveillance et la défense des frontières Le libre exercice de leur religion ainsi que de leurs us et coutumes sera assuré aux recrues.

X. Affectation de tous les revenus, exceptés ceux des douanes, postes et télégraphes, tabacs, spiritueux et autres affectés déjà à des services spéciaux, aux besoins du service local, abandon d'une part du surplus des revenus susindiqués et de la totalité des taxes des routes et de l'impôt supplémentaire pour l'instruction publique et des 3% des droits d'entrée pour la construction des routes et chemins de fer d'intérêt local et l'entretien des écoles publiques.

Reconnaissance aux communes du droit d'exploitation directe ou par l'entremise des tiers des forêts avec obligation pour elles de se charger de la garde et conservation des forêts, de régler les coupes d'après les prescriptions techniques à indiquer par les préposés forestiers et de payer ou de faire payer au fisc la taxe qui sera fixée selon l'essence et la distance de la forêt au port ou lieu de vente

XI. Droit pour les Conseils généraux de statuer sur le budget des Vilayets et de contrôler les dépenses.

XII. Affectation des revenus nécessaires pour garantir la réalisation des fonds nécessaires à la reconstruction des maisons et édifices brûlés et institution d'une commission mixte et indépendante pour surveiller l'installation de la population éprouvée et la construction des maisons brûlées. Restitution des armes confisquées avec l'obligation pour les possesseurs de se conformer aux règles y relatives.

The reply is headed "adopté par l'Assemblée des Chefs Albanaï réunis à Gertche le 10/23 Juin 1911." It was sent to Sir Edward Grey as an enclosure in Mr. Akers-Douglas's despatch No. 16 of June 26, 1911, R. July 3. (F O. 25820/14/11/44.)

No. 503.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Arthur,

St. Petersburg, June 29, 1911.

In the Albanian question Nératow's attitude has undergone several phases during the last few days, but there has been a certain continuity of idea running through them. When the position of the King of Montenegro was the main point at issue Nératow was full of interest, and on Sir E. Grey suggesting the necessity of a guarantee by the Powers, and of a preliminary understanding between the Powers most nearly interested, Nératow was even ready to take the initiative in inviting the Powers to ask Turkey for assurances.⁽²⁾ As soon as King Nicholas' action in arranging for an interview between the Turkish Representative and the Albanian chiefs seemed to him to put the King *hors de cause* he appeared to lose for the moment all inclination to move and indeed showed clearly enough that so long as Montenegro remained outside the dispute the fate of the Albanians did not concern Russia overmuch (my tel. No. 134).⁽³⁾ Then came Sir E. Grey's proposal to the Powers for concerted action at Constantinople.⁽⁴⁾ I cannot say that Nératow displayed any great enthusiasm in acceding to this proposal, but still he consented to join in the proposed action if the other Powers did, which he evidently thought they would not. The clearest thing about all this is that Russia's interest in the present crisis centres mainly in Montenegro and that so long as there is no immediate danger of Montenegro becoming involved in a conflict with Turkey, Russia is difficult to move. I put it to Nératow that Austria, to judge from the inspired articles in the Austrian press, seemed to intend to act independently and that joint action by the Powers was the best way to prevent her doing so. He expressed disbelief in Austria really going to war on the Albanian question. The only thing that he said he was afraid of was that Austria might push Montenegro into hostilities, and then she would no doubt intervene herself. Of course if Nératow was once convinced that Austria was really on the point of taking strong independent action, he would be only too pleased to adopt any suggestion of Sir E. Grey's for joint action by the Powers which could forestall it.—Nératow tells me that from conversations which he has had with the

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. II of 1911.]

⁽²⁾ [Marginal note by Mr. O'Beirne: "My telegram No. 132." *v. supra*, p. 471, No. 490.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 477-8, No. 499, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 476-7, No. 498. *cp.* p. 481, No. 502, and *encl.* 1.]

Austrian Ambassador he has the impression that Austria would be willing to concert with Russia and Italy as to the Albanian question: but he appears to have had no indication at all regarding Germany's probable attitude. . . .^(c)

Yours very sincerely,

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

⁽⁵⁾ [The rest of this letter deals with the question of the Persian loan, the Trans-Persian railway, and some minor questions.]

No. 504.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Therapia, July 2, 1911.

D. 12.40 P.M.

R. 4 P.M.

F.O. 25647/14/11/44.

Tel. (No. 151.) Very Confidential.

Your telegram No. 163 ()⁽²⁾ to Paris.

French Ambassador has been acquainted by his Government with the substance of His Majesty's Government's proposals, and last night expressed to me a very strong adverse opinion, on the grounds that (a) they would encourage resistance of the insurgents; (b) the Turks would deeply resent proposal for interference in their internal affairs; and (c) Germany will certainly refuse to join in the proposed collective *démarche*, and will make considerable capital at our expense in consequence of this correct attitude.

Although he did not say so, I gather from Ambassador that the French Government were disinclined to join us.

As regards (c), I have some reason to believe Turks have already learnt the proposals of His Majesty's Government from German sources.

MINUTE.

We should like to have the opinion of the French Gov[ernmen]t.

A. N.
E. G

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris by bag.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 476-7, No. 498, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

No. 505.

Mr. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 26788/26788/11/7.

(No. 75.) Very Confidential.

Sir,

Sofia, D. July 4, 1911.

R. July 10, 1911.

Austrian influence with King Ferdinand has now reached its high-water mark.

My reasons for holding this opinion are as follows:—

The bestowal of the High Order of the Golden Fleece on the King: the successful conclusion of a loan with Austria: the two friendly receptions accorded in the course of the late spring and early summer to the King by His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Austria. King Ferdinand took advantage of the temporary estrangement which had occurred between His Imperial Majesty and the Archduke Francis Ferdinand to ingratiate himself with the Emperor, and the second private visit which took place in March last, ended in the bestowal of the Golden Fleece. And lastly the too flattering, not to say unctuous behaviour of Baron Giskra towards His Majesty, which is now bringing its own reward.

I gathered recently, from private Bulgarian sources, that the King had been abusing Austria, and especially Austrian politics, and my Greek Colleague informed me that His Majesty had even spoken to the Italian Minister on the subject.

Count Bosdari confirmed this in the course of conversation with me the other day. His Excellency stated that during the "Cercle" after luncheon, at Tirnovo, the King asked him if he was not surprised at the line Austria had adopted as regards Albania. His Majesty spoke in a general way very disparagingly of Count von Aehrenthal's politics. Count Bosdari told me that he was very cautious in his reply. He informed the King that Count von Aehrenthal took no action respecting Albania, the Albanian littoral, and Montenegro, without previously informing the Italian Government of his intentions and obtaining their sanction. Austria might, of course be playing them false, but he did not believe this was the case. His Majesty was evidently not very well pleased with Count Bosdari's reply: he would like to play off Italy against Austria, if possible, here. The game of playing off Russia against Austria has grown somewhat stale by constant repetition. Had my Italian Colleague fallen into the trap and abused Austria, there is but little doubt that, when the weathercock veered, the new wind would have blown unfavourably for him.

The snares set personally by His Majesty to involve the Representatives of those States in whose politics he is temporarily interested, often place these latter in a difficult and far from enviable position.

The action of His Majesty King Ferdinand, as reported above, shows that he also is imbued, as are so many others, rightly or wrongly, with the idea that Austria has got the better of Italy hitherto in so far as the Albanian Question is concerned.

On the other hand, a "Rapprochement" is likely to take place between Italy and Turkey, once the latter disabuse themselves of the idea that Italy will make encroachments on Tripoli.

As a corollary to the above, Assim Bey, the Turkish Minister, asked me yesterday if I had remarked that the King of Italy had embraced Prince Yussuf Izzedin on his arrival at Rome. He pointed out that this was the first time that any European Royalty had embraced a Turkish Sultan or Heir to the Turkish Throne, and that greetings of such a description had hitherto been confined to handshakes.

I have, &c.

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

MINUTES.

The last paragraph is interesting.

? King Ferdinand's idea of the relations between Austria-Hungary and Italy is probably nearer the truth than Count Bosdari's somewhat sanguine assertions.

R. M.

10/7/11.

Parts of this despatch are not very clear.

R. P. M.

A. N.

No. 506.

Mr. Akers-Douglas to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 28109/14/11/44.

(No. 21.) Confidential.

Sir,

Cettinje, D. July 8, 1911.

R. July 18, 1911.

Difficult as it is to follow the various phases of King Nicholas's policy it is, I think, abundantly clear that His Majesty is making every effort to find some way out of his situation in regard to the Albanian insurrection, without loss of his prestige and, if possible, with some advantage to himself, as well as to the Malissors. He is doubtful of the possibility of a guarantee being obtained from Turkey by the Great Powers acting together, a guarantee which he hopes might be given through himself to the insurgents. He sees that events are at present rather moving towards the intervention by the more interested Powers alone, and this does not suit his policy of maintaining his own undivided control over the Malissors.

It is clear that the Porte is now most anxious to bring about a submission of the insurgents before any intervention takes place. The Porte is fully aware of King

Nicholas's influence, which may still have to be taken into account in any settlement of the crisis. He himself is determined that it shall not be dispensed with. To-day before leaving for Podgoritzza with the latest concessions offered by his Government Sadreddin Bey asked His Majesty if he would not say the one word necessary to put a stop to the insurrection. The dispatch of the Archbishop of Scutari and of the Abbot of the Mirdites, and the efforts of Sadreddin Bey show the desire of the Turkish Government not only to come to an agreement with the Albanians but also to cut the ground from under the feet of the King of Montenegro.

I met the King to-day and I pointed out to His Majesty that the Porte had now offered some further concessions and showed a disposition to meet the demands of the Malissors as far as possible; I was sure that His Majesty as much as the rest of Europe desired to [see] an end to these troubles, and the danger to peace averted. The King said he was doing all he could to facilitate the negotiations with the Malissors, but he considered the Turkish offers still too vague and insufficient for them. I asked if he knew what assurances would satisfy them, and he said they demanded all the points of the recent memorandum—though he admitted these were too far-reaching and aimed rather at an autonomy for the whole of Albania. In any case, he said, the guarantee was the great essential, and this would have to be provided in some way. He admitted it was a difficult matter.

King Nicholas is in constant communication with the chiefs of the refugees and, through his officers, with those of the insurgents. He is evidently determined that anyone who treats with them shall do so under his auspices. Having brought the Archbishop of Scutari up to Cetinje he invited him to dinner with Ismail Kemal Bey and the Turkish Minister, and he proposed a toast to the happy solution of the crisis, offering up a prayer that the "Pastor might succeed in bringing back his lost sheep to the fold." The Archbishop, though of course an Austrian nominee and acting at the request of the Turkish Government in this mission, is, I am told, a strong Albanian patriot, and has little confidence in or liking for his errand.

There is not much exaggeration in King Nicholas's assurance that he could bring the revolt to an end in twenty-four hours and induce all the refugees to return. But he adds, with considerable reason, that he cannot do this without some guarantees for them. On this point his declarations have never varied, but remain the same as given in his note to the Russian Minister some weeks ago (of which I herewith enclose a copy).

It appears that so strong is the hatred of the Mallissors for the Turks and their distrust of any promises that the majority prefer to fight to the last rather than surrender their arms and return to homes which are from all accounts entirely destroyed. They say they would find no shelter for many months, even if the Turks ever begin to reconstruct houses, and that life without their arms is of no value to them. As to the refugees in particular they will not return until King Nicholas gives the word. The king is naturally most anxious that the Turks should not be left to suppress the rebellion by force of arms, for a serious danger of conflicts on the frontier might arise, when even His Majesty's remarkable control over his subjects might not suffice to restrain their ardour for a fight. There is another awkward question which may arise: if a disarmament takes place, the source of origin of a large number of weapons would be incontrovertibly established.

I have, &c.

A. AKERS DOUGLAS.

Enclosure in No. 506.

Notice autographe de S.M. le Roi Nicholas de Monténégro sur la question Albanaise.

Cetinje, le 4/17 Juin, 1911.

Le Ministre de Turquie à Cetinje a communiqué verbalement au Gouvernement Royal Monténégrin que le Gouvernement Ottoman a l'intention de donner une amnistie générale aux Albanais mais sans préciser en quoi consisterait cette amnistie.

Le Gouvernement R[oyal] Monténégro a toujours observé une stricte neutralité dans la question Albanaise et telle sera sa conduite à l'avenir. Le Gouvernement R[oyal] Monténégro à maintes reprises a fait des démarches par l'intermédiaire de la Légation Imp[ériale] Ottomane à Cetinje pour obtenir une amnistie du Gouv[ernement] Imp[ériale] pour les Albanais. Il a même obtenu des promesses et des assurances tant écrites que verbales des autorités Imp[ériales] Ottomanes compétentes sur la base desquelles le Gouv[ernement] Royal a déjà fait rentrer plusieurs groupes assez nombreux d'Albanais dans leur pays. Malheureusement les autorités Imp[ériales] Ottomanes n'ont point maintenu les promesses formelles données aux Albanais par notre entremise, ce qui a obligé ces derniers à se soulever de nouveau en masse et à main armée.

Les poursuites de l'armée Turque les forcent de chercher refuge de nouveau au Monténégro. Les Albanais accusent maintenant le Monténégro pour les promesses d'amnistie Turque qui n'ont pas été maintenues par les autorités Imp[ériales] Ottomanes.

En conséquence, le Gouv[ernement] R[oyal] Monténégro est certain que les Albanais ayant perdu toute foi dans les promesses turques ne voudront plus écouter nos conseils ni même notre pression amicale pour réintégrer leurs foyers. D'autre part, le Gouv[ernement] Royal ne pourra plus prendre sur soi cette responsabilité de conseiller aux Albanais de rentrer chez eux de crainte que les promesses d'amnistie turques ne restent un vain mot comme elles sont restées jusqu'à présent.

C'est seulement dans le cas qu'une ou plusieurs Grandes Puissances voudraient prendre sur soi cette responsabilité de l'exécution ponctuelle des clauses de l'amnistie, que le Gouvernement Imp[ériale] Ottoman se propose d'accorder aux Albanais, que le Gouvernement Royal Monténégro pourrait conseiller aux Albanais de rentrer dans leurs foyers.

No. 507.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 27887/14/11/44.

(No. 199.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. July 12, 1911.

R. July 17, 1911.

In the first conversation which I had with the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs after my return to my post His Excellency informed me that there had been an exchange of views between the Russian and Austrian Governments on the Albanian question and that the result of the conversations which had taken place both at Vienna and St. Petersburg was to show that the two Governments were agreed on the general principle of maintaining the *status quo* and on the advisability of giving counsels of moderation both at Constantinople and Cetinje. Monsieur Nératow, however, showed but little disposition to discuss the question in any detail and, on my asking for information with regard to the recent visit of a special Montenegrin envoy,⁽²⁾ His Excellency merely replied "Il nous a demandé des médicaments." I thereupon enquired whether the Russian Government had been able to comply with this request which, I presumed, included "médicaments" in the shape of moral or material support, but the only answer which I received was that the Russian Red Cross Society would supply Montenegro with the medical stores required for treating the sick and wounded among the Albanian refugees.

⁽¹⁾ [Sir Edward Grey had already received the information, given more fully in this despatch, in Sir G. Buchanan's telegram No. 146 of July 7, D. 9-15 P.M., R. 10-30 P.M. (F.O. 26574/14/11/44.)]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 481, No. 502.]

When I called on Monsieur Nératow two days later, His Excellency was less reserved. He repeated what he had already told me about the views of the Austrian and Russian Governments, but added that the conversations which had taken place between them had no special significance, any more than those which the Russian Government had carried on with the other Powers. I told him that, from the information which had reached me, it appeared that Count Aehrenthal was seriously preoccupied with the gravity of the situation and enquired whether the Austrian Government had put forward any proposal for common action between the three Powers who were more directly interested with a view to preventing an outbreak of hostilities between Turkey and Montenegro or to localising them should they break out.

Monsieur Nératow replied in the negative, adding that the present state of affairs inspired him with the gravest apprehensions. It was not that he credited Turkey with the intention of forcing a quarrel on Montenegro, but that he feared that the two countries were gradually drifting into war and that the slightest frontier incident might cause it to break out. It was, therefore, he thought, a mistaken policy to sit still and do nothing until we were confronted with an accomplished fact. I enquired whether His Excellency had any suggestion to make. Monsieur Nératow replied that he had been giving the matter his careful consideration and that he had come to the conclusion that the best course for the Powers to pursue would be to offer to mediate between Turkey and Montenegro, without attempting to intervene between the Turks and the Albanians. He had not as yet mentioned this suggestion to anyone and, before approaching any of the other Powers on the subject, he thought that it would be prudent to enquire privately at Constantinople whether such an offer of mediation would be acceptable to the Turkish Government. Such a mode of proceeding would, in his opinion, be preferable to endeavouring to arrive at a preliminary understanding with Austria and Italy, as such an offer of mediation as he proposed must, if it was to prove effective, be made by a united Europe; and Germany would never consent to join in any step to which she knew the Porte would take serious exception. The news which he had received that morning from Constantinople was rather more hopeful and he would wait another 24 hours to see if this improvement was maintained before moving in the matter.

In view of the more conciliatory disposition shown by the Porte during the last few days His Excellency has not yet given effect to his suggestion.

The semi-official "Rossia" published an article a few days ago which evidently reflected Monsieur Nératow's views. After reminding the Turks that it is in their own interest to come to a sound agreement with the Albanians, it impresses on the latter the historic truth that a peace can only be considered lasting which is concluded between political opponents without the intervention of third persons, however disinterested these last named may be. It further tells them that they should bear in mind the historic link existing between them and the Ottoman Empire and that this link guarantees the preservation of their nationality to a greater degree than does a political venture even when it bears the high-sounding title of a struggle for the independence of Albania.

I have, &c

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

Vienna, July 21, 1911.

D. 7.30 P.M.

R. 10.30 P.M.

F.O. 28699/14/11/44.

Tel. (No. 81.)

Albania.

I saw Count Aehrenthal this afternoon. He leaves to-morrow night for five weeks' holiday, during which, however, he will continue the direction of affairs. I asked him how matters stood between him and Russia. From his answer I gathered that nothing serious has been done with regard to Albania, but a conversation has been opened between the two Governments, and relations are now sufficiently good between them to allow of a rapid exchange of views, should the situation suddenly grow worse. The Italian Ambassador here also declares that nothing is being done at St. Petersburg and Rome.

Count Aehrenthal spoke to me of the mediation idea, which he called a Russian one (see St. Petersburg telegram No. 146).⁽²⁾ He did not approve of it, because, according to him, the Powers could only mediate between Montenegro and Turkey if invited to do so by one or the other, and he saw no prospect of this. While not saying clearly that he would decline to take part in a mediation if invited, he pointed out the difficulty of the position in which the Powers would find themselves should their proposals for a settlement be rejected by one or by both parties.

I enquired of Count Aehrenthal whether he had any suggestions to make. His views are as follows:—

Before the expiration of the period of grace the Powers should, if war be imminent, declare formally both to Montenegro and to Turkey that they must maintain peace, and that if they should break it they do so at their peril, but that the territorial *status quo* will be insisted on by the Powers at the close of hostilities. He seems to think that such a step would be most useful. As to what Power should take the initiative in proposing this, he was vague, but I think that he would prefer that it should be done by another Power than Austria, Russia, or Italy. On my enquiring whether he thought that Germany would take part in such a course, and that if she abstained would not Austria do the same, he turned upon me sharply and said: "Since when is my policy moulded in Berlin?" In his opinion, common action would be preferable separately on the above lines.

Count Aehrenthal expressed to me his sympathy with the Albanians, and he informed me that he has advised the Turks urgently to give way with regard to their demand to carry arms. I pointed out to him how difficult it would be for the Powers to invite the insurgents to return to their homes without their arms. He replied that he thought that Turkey would, at present, think twice before ill-treating these people, in fact, he said, that Europe could not permit gross brutalities on the insurgents who submitted.

Count Aehrenthal thinks that the Northern Albanian question in itself may possibly be settled peacefully, but if the insurrection spreads all over Albania, the situation will become very grave, as Turkey is not disposed, without a desperate fight, to admit of autonomy. If autonomy for Albania could be brought about by peaceful means, Count Aehrenthal would be glad. He said that time was necessary before this could be accomplished. (?Montenegro), Greece, Servia, Bulgaria, all

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent by post to Paris (as No. 301); to Constantinople (as No. 200); to Rome (as No. 117); to St. Petersburg (as No. 200); to Berlin (as No. 162); to Cetinje (as No. 15).]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. This telegram, No. 146 of July 7, described M. Nératov's view of the serious character of the situation, and his proposal for the Powers to intervene between Montenegro and Turkey (F.O. 26674/14/11/44), given at greater length in despatch No. 199, v. immediately preceding document.]

have had to pass through a long period of struggle before attaining their independence. Albania could not expect hers in a day; she must bide her time.

Count Aehrenthal told me that things were going badly at Constantinople; the Grand Vizier and Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs were men who were used up. There were more capable ones waiting in the background. He thought it probable that a change of the Ministry would take place in the autumn, and he hopes that a new Cabinet may prove more statesmanlike when dealing with Albania. I think that Count Aehrenthal's main desire at present is to gain time, and, if possible, to prevent an outbreak of war between Turkey and Montenegro.

MINUTES.

This telegram was written before the Ambassador had been able to obtain Count Aehrenthal's views on the proposals made by King Nicholas to the British, French, Austrian, Italian and Russian Representatives at Cettinje.⁽³⁾ He will no doubt endeavour to consult Count Aehrenthal on this point to-day before the latter leaves for his holiday.

R. M.
22/7/11.
R. P. M.
A. N.

The initiative in making a declaration that in event of war territorial status quo will be insisted on by the Powers should be taken by Russia, Austria and Italy. We can support but not initiate it.

E. G.

⁽³⁾ [These proposals were made by King Nicholas to the representatives of the five Powers at Cettinje on July 20. They are described by Mr. Akers-Douglas, in his telegram No. 37 of July 20, 1911, D. 7-35 P.M., R. July 21, 1911, 11-40 P.M., as "on the lines of those recently offered by the Porte but a little wider and more precise." (*cp. supra*, p. 475, *Ed. note.*) (F.O. 28650/14/11/44.) Mr. Akers-Douglas states:—

We pointed out that even if Porte offered these concessions and communicated them to our Governments we could not say whether they would agree to address Montenegro as suggested. That in any case it seemed to us doubtful if they would give undertaking further required by His Majesty, and that moreover Turkey would probably protest against any such action. We would however inform our Governments of his proposed solution.]

No. 509.

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 31010/10578/11/7.

(No. 80.)

Sir,

Sofia, D. July 23, 1911.

R. August 8, 1911.

As I had the honour to report in my telegram No. 14 of July 22⁽¹⁾, the Grand Sobranje was closed by His Majesty King Ferdinand at Tirnovo, the ancient Capital of Bulgaria, on the 22nd instant.

As you are aware from previous correspondence, this Grand Sobranje was convoked to consider the Bill previously adopted by the National Sobranje respecting certain necessary modifications of the Constitution.

I have the honour to forward, in duplicate, copy of the original articles of the Constitution⁽²⁾ now altered-parallel with the modifications adopted by the Grand Sobranje. These modifications amount to fifteen in all; some of them are mere verbal alterations rendered necessary by the changed status of Bulgaria now legally

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 28867/10578/11/7.)]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.]

raised from a Principality to a Kingdom, whilst others are of far-reaching importance, and will affect the future of the dynasty, and the internal politics of this country to a considerable extent.

Article 6 now runs: "Le Roi portera le titre de Sa Majesté le Roi des Bulgares; l'Héritier du Trône celui d'Altesse Royale."

This alteration, although obviously a necessary one, led to some very plain speaking on the part of certain of the more advanced members of the Agrarian, Radical, and Socialist parties. They accused the King of illegally making use of the title of His Majesty the King of the Bulgarians before the new title had been ratified by the Grand Sobranjé. As a matter of fact the King did adopt the title as soon as the independence of Bulgaria had been proclaimed: he was accused by the Opposition of unseemly haste in this matter, but the modification eventually passed without a division.

The next alteration proposed was one of the highest importance. The Government suggested that the original article 17 of the Constitution should be modified as follows: "Le Roi représente l'État dans tous les rapports avec les pays étrangers. Le Gouvernement négocie et conclut au nom du Roi tous les traités avec les États étrangers; le Roi ratifie ces traités. Les Ministres communiquent les traités au Sobranjé si les intérêts et la sécurité du pays le permettent (Article 92 de la Constitution).

"Toutefois, les traités de paix, de commerce, et tous les accords qui imposent des charges financières à l'État ou portent modifications des lois existantes ou encore touchent aux droits politiques et civils des citoyens bulgares, n'entrent en vigueur qu'après avoir été adoptés par le Sobranjé.

"Les dispositions secrètes d'un traité ne peuvent, dans aucun cas, annuler ses dispositions patentes."

His Majesty was anxious that the new article should run somewhat as follows: "Le Roi représente l'État dans tous les rapports avec les pays étrangers. *Le Roi négocie et conclut tous les traités avec les États étrangers: le Roi ratifie ces traités*, et les communique[n]t [*sic*] aux Ministres si les intérêts et la sécurité du pays le permettent."⁽³⁾

The Committee chosen by the House to make suggestions in the modifications threw out the Government proposals, which had been drawn up in accordance with His Majesty's wishes, and after a ten days' debate adopted the modification as it now stands. This alteration places the power of negotiating and concluding treaties in the hands of the Government, who will be practically bound to communicate such treaties to the Sobranjé. The debates on this article lasted a week and gave the Socialists, Radicals, and even a few members of the Agrarian party, an opportunity of attacking the Head of the State, which they did not hesitate to avail themselves of. The Opposition members stated that it would be an act of criminal negligence on the part of the Grand Sobranjé to allow the treaty-making powers to be invested in the hands of His Majesty alone. He was a skilled and able politician, who always looked to his own personal aggrandisement in the first place, and to whom the good of his adopted country was but quite a secondary consideration. He was quite capable of selling them by private treaty either to Austria or Russia, whichever seemed to bid highest for his favour: he was, some of the members stated, entirely unreliable and unpatriotic. Several members were called to order during this portion of the debates, and much excitement reigned in the Chamber.

The Government pointed out that the question raised by the Opposition was entirely hypothetical and that the question of the King being allowed to conclude Treaties on his own responsibility was not before the House. To which it was retorted that, except for dread of the Opposition, it would be before the House at the present time.

(3) [The object was to enable the King to make a treaty with a foreign Power without informing the Sobranjé. The other modifications are not of great importance.]

Finally the Government carried their modifications. . . .⁽¹⁾

To sum up, it may be considered that the Royal Prerogative has been somewhat diminished by the new modifications and that some of these latter carry in them germs of trouble, especially in so far as future Civil Lists are concerned.

The outspokenness of certain of the Agrarian, Radical and Socialist members has caused universal astonishment throughout the country and the results of the deliberations of the recent Grand Sobranjé will be watched with interest by those who have the welfare of this country at heart.

I have, &c.

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

⁽¹⁾ [The remainder of the letter gives details about the appointment of the Council of Ministers to act at any time in the absence of the King; the Royal dignity made hereditary; fixing the Civil List, the religious faith of the King (Greek Orthodox—an exception being made for King Ferdinand only); naturalisation of foreigners, the powers of military tribunals; the creation of two new Ministries; modifications in the term of a Deputy's mandate, and increase in the period of annual sessions of the Sobranjé.]

No. 510.

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 31011/14/11/44.

(No. 81.) Very Confidential.

Sofia, D. July 24, 1911.

Sir,

R. August 8, 1911.

From certain information which has reached this Capital it appears as if Austrian policy in the last four weeks had assumed a somewhat more active shape in the direction of the creation of an autonomous Albania.

An Austrian Agent has been sounding different Bulgarian Statesmen as to what they believe this country would be willing to accept, in the first instance, it being understood that the lion's share of Macedonia shall eventually accrue to Bulgaria.

The following are Austrian views—i.e. they are believed here to be the views of Count von Aehrenthal, as expressed by the Agent.

If the Albanian crisis goes from bad to worse and extends to Macedonia, Austria must expect that Bulgaria will then seize the opportunity of satisfying her national ambitions. She cannot, moreover, undertake any overt action without the consent of Austria. "If you take premature action on your own responsibility we will stir up Roumania against you. In any case you will have to count with us when the moment comes for realising the profits of the general break-up: it will therefore be to your advantage to come to an agreement with us in advance. There are two points, however, on which Austria will not give way. She wishes to see a weakened and, if possible, territorially attenuated Serbia, and an autonomous and strong Albania. We are prepared now to come to a private understanding with you on this question and, in fact, it is the condition of our future co-operation. To suit our views Albania should extend to the east as far as Prishtina, and thence north-east to the actual frontier of Serbia; from thence along the left bank of the Morava, joining the river Vardar at Uscub, and following this river to its outlet in the Ægean Sea.

"We propose that you should have the Servian province of Pirot, as far as the Morava and all that part of Macedonia situated between the Rhodope, the middle course of the Vardar and the northern course of the Struma. The town of Salonica and the peninsula of Chalcidice would thus remain outside the new Albania, and the extended Bulgaria, under the sovereignty of Turkey as at present."

There is no doubt that the above suggestions have been made in influential Bulgarian quarters and I am convinced that His Majesty the King has cognizance

of them. My Servian, French, Roumanian and Greek colleagues are "au courant" of this offer.

M. Ghennadieff, the leader of the Stambouloffist party, has gone so far as to reply indirectly in his paper the "Volja" to the above suggestions and he makes no secret of his party having been approached on the matter.

The "Volja" of the 12th instant states that an Austrian agent has come recently to Sofia charged with a "Mission d'étude" in the Balkans, he has spoken with one of the Chiefs of the Stambouloffist party at Sofia and he has said that the condition of European Turkey is such that an autonomous Albania will shortly have to be created and that events may march quicker than was originally supposed.

Bulgaria can, however, never agree to the proposals now made. Bulgaria desires a large, independent and autonomous Macedonia and not a large autonomous Albania, which will be entirely under Austrian influence.

It is now indubitable that the question of the partition of European Turkey is under discussion: it is openly so, and the possibility of action on the part of Austria is doubtless known at Belgrade. Should the next forward move prove unfavourable for Servia, that country will be threatened with national extinction as Austrian intentions in that quarter are extremely hostile.

The difficulties of creating an autonomous Albania are well understood here, as so many international interests are involved. Italy will get nothing but fair words and Russia will have a difficult rôle to play in saving Servia from the Austrian grip.

My Roumanian colleague informs me that the King of Roumania told him personally last year that Roumania would do her utmost to prevent a dismemberment of, or encroachment on, Servian Territory, and that the Roumanian Government had informed Count von Aehrenthal to this effect during the Bosnian crisis.

Vienna will of course deny all reports of such action and much will depend on the future outlook in Southern Albania, but a programme is now under discussion and it is necessary for the Powers interested to realize that the present condition of affairs is unendurable for a long period both in Albania and Macedonia.

Bulgarian pretensions are astonishingly great and King Ferdinand will be obliged to support them when the time comes, or lose his Throne. He is essentially a man of peace as well as an able and astute Statesman, who will not hesitate in the end to throw in his lot either with Austria or Russia as may suit best, in the first place, his personal aggrandizement, and, in the second, his country's interests.

I have the honour to enclose herewith a map⁽¹⁾ drawn up by Mr. Heard at my request, showing the Austrian proposals for an autonomous Albania. The Greek extension is purely conjectural, as nothing is known here as yet respecting Austrian wishes in this respect.

The offer of the Servian province of Pirot, in which many Bulgarians reside, to Bulgaria, is a continuation of the Austrian policy of sowing discord between these two Balkan States.

Copies of this despatch will be sent to His Majesty's Ambassadors at Constantinople and Vienna and to His Majesty's Minister at Belgrade by next Messengers.

I have, &c.

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

MINUTES.

This all looks rather apocryphal.

Ask Sir F. Cartwright for his observations.⁽²⁾

H. N.

L. M.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

⁽²⁾ [This was done in Sir Edward Grey's despatch No. 57 of August 18, to Sir F. Cartwright. (F.O. 31011/14/11/44.) For Sir F. Cartwright's reply *v. infra*, pp. 499-500, No. 516; pp. 508-4, No. 519.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 29441/14/11/44.

(No. 50.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 25, 1911.

Count Mensdorff informed me to-day, by the instructions of Count Aehrenthal, that the extended period of twenty days for the submission of the Malissori tribesmen had been granted by the Turks on the advice of Austria and Italy.

Count Aehrenthal had exchanged views with the Governments in Rome and St. Petersburg as to what could be done to prevent a Turco-Montenegrin conflict if the twenty days of grace did not suffice to put an end to the trouble. He would, however, always observe the rule of non-intervention, though he would discuss with the Italian and Russian Governments whether, and what sort of, a "démarche" should be made at Constantinople and Cettinje at the right moment. The step taken by King Nicholas had modified the situation.⁽¹⁾ Count Aehrenthal approved the answer which had been given by the Diplomatic Corps in Cettinje, and he proposed to wait for the reply of the Porte to the King of Montenegro, for if this reply was favourable, the situation would be solved. In any circumstances, Count Aehrenthal would not take part in the "démarche" at Cettinje suggested by the King of Montenegro: partly because he would not be dragged into the Albanian difficulty, which the Triple Alliance and Russia regarded as an internal Turkish question. They could, therefore, neither accept the supervision of reforms nor guarantee them. If the Turks refused to agree to the proposal of the King of Montenegro, then the Powers might have to use plain language at Constantinople and Cettinje, to prevent hostilities. In this case, Count Aehrenthal would submit to the Powers a proposal for a declaration at Constantinople and Cettinje.

I said that we had already expressed to the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs how important it was, in the interests of the credit and stability of the new régime, that a liberal and generous settlement should be come to with the Albanians. But expressions of this kind by one Power alone had but little influence.

Count Mensdorff said that other Powers had expressed the same opinion at Constantinople.

I remarked that, so far, while some suggested steps had been put aside as being impracticable or undesirable, all the steps which had been taken had been ineffective.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 490, No. 508, *mn.*, and note ⁽³⁾.]

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 29980/14/11/44.

(No. 216.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. July 27, 1911.

R. July 31, 1911.

With reference to my despatch No. 199 of the 12th instant,⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to report that the conversations which have taken place during the past fortnight between the Cabinets of St. Petersburg and Vienna have so far yielded no positive result and there seems no immediate prospect of an agreement being arrived at as to a common line of action on the Albanian question.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 487-8, No. 507.]

On the 14th and 20th of this month the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs had conversations with the Austrian Ambassador, in the first of which Count Thurn seems to have suggested a further exchange of views, while Monsieur Nératow expressed his acquiescence and at the same time communicated to him his suggestion that the Powers should offer to mediate between Turkey and Montenegro. In the second conversation, Monsieur Nératow handed Count Thurn an *aide-mémoire* embodying his views with regard to this proposal, which was to serve, as he subsequently informed me, as an "entrée en matière" for a conversation which he thought might now be commenced between Rome, Vienna and St. Petersburg.

As the news which reached him respecting a probable extension of the rebellion caused him considerable alarm, he authorised the Russian Ambassador to try and ascertain privately whether the proposed mediation would be agreeable to the Porte, leaving His Excellency a free hand should he consider the moment favourable to try and induce the Ottoman Government to take the initiative in requesting the Powers to lend their good offices so as to prevent an outbreak of hostilities on the side of Montenegro.

On my enquiring in the course of a conversation which I had with Monsieur Nératow on the 23rd instant what view His Excellency took of the latest proposals which the King of Montenegro had submitted to the Representatives of the Powers at Cetinje, His Excellency said that they had made a favourable impression on him and that he rather regretted the cold reception which they had met with on the part of the Foreign Representatives, as he feared that the Porte would in consequence be less disposed than ever to take them into favourable consideration. I then called His Excellency's attention to the passage in Mr. Akers-Douglas's telegram No. 87 of July 21,⁽²⁾ which stated that the King would only use his influence with the Malissoris and endeavour to induce them to return home and give in their submission on the condition that the Powers would undertake to see to the proper execution of the agreements. Monsieur Nératow replied that the telegram which he had received from the Russian Minister at Cetinje had made no mention of such a condition, and that he supposed that it had been overlooked through inadvertence. It entirely altered the circumstances of the case and would render the whole proposal unacceptable, unless His Majesty could be induced to drop it.

On the following day Monsieur Nératow informed me that he had heard from the Russian Ambassador at Vienna that Count Aehrenthal did not favour his idea of an offer of mediation on the part of the Powers between Turkey and Montenegro and had expressed the opinion that it would be better to await the reply of the Porte to the King of Montenegro's proposals. If that reply was unfavourable it would, Count Aehrenthal thought, show that the Porte would not entertain a proposal of intervention in any form, while if on the other hand those proposals were accepted there would be no need for an offer of mediation. The attitude adopted by Count Aehrenthal had, Monsieur Nératow said, caused him considerable surprise, as the suggested mediation did not go so far as the proposals put forward by King Nicholas; but it was no doubt to be attributed to the fact that the mediation idea was of Russian and not Austrian origin. Monsieur Tcharykow had reported that there was no chance of the Porte agreeing to the King's proposals, and Count Aehrenthal was also doubtless aware of this fact. In reply to my enquiry as to whether His Excellency would now drop the idea of mediation altogether, Monsieur Nératow said that he saw no reason for doing this, as if Monsieur Tcharykow could succeed in inducing the Porte to take the initiative in the matter no possible harm could be done, while if he failed he supposed that a fresh conversation would have to be opened at Vienna on another basis.

In Sir F. Cartwright's telegram No. 81 of the 21st July, of which a copy was forwarded to me in your despatch No. 200 of the 22nd instant,⁽³⁾ I notice that Count Aehrenthal bases his objections to Monsieur Nératow's proposal on the ground

(²) [*v. supra*, pp. 489-90, No. 508, and *note* (³). (The date should be July 20.)]

(³) [*v. supra*, pp. 489-90, No. 508, and *note* (¹).]

that the Powers would find themselves in a very difficult position should their offer of mediation be rejected by either of the two parties concerned. It has always, however, been Monsieur Nératow's intention to avoid exposing the Powers to any such rebuff by first sounding the Porte as to whether his proposal would be acceptable or not, and from the reports which he has received from Monsieur Tcharykow he has reason to believe that the Ottoman Government would not be averse to it. His Excellency is not likely to raise any objections to Count Aehrenthal's proposal that, in the event of war being imminent, the Powers should warn both Turkey and Montenegro that no change in the territorial *status quo ante* will be permitted, as he has already caused the King of Montenegro to be informed that His Majesty has nothing to hope from a war, whatever may be its results. Monsieur Nératow, however, holds that if matters are allowed to take their course it is by no means certain that such a warning would have the effect of staying the hands of either Government, and that it is therefore necessary to find some *modus procedendi* that would ward off the danger of an actual outbreak of hostilities.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

MINUTE.

Very soon there will be no Albanians left alive to mediate about.

H. N.
A. N

No. 513.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Vienna, July 29, 1911.

F.O. 29906/14/11/44.

D. 8.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 84.) Very Confidential.

R. 9.50 P.M.

Albania.

I learn from a confidential source that Count Aehrenthal is most anxious for and hopeful of finding a temporary solution of the question of the return of refugees of Albania by making use of King of Montenegro, thereby flattering his vanity and at the same time helping him financially. This does not quite tally with language used to me by Count Aehrenthal about Montenegro.

At the Ministry for Foreign Affairs they apparently desire to tide over the present crisis till next year, when they expect a general conflagration in the Balkans. This is the second time I have been confidentially informed that Count Aehrenthal expects a catastrophe in Turkey in the near future.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Cettinje (as No. 63); to Constantinople (as No. 291); by post to Berlin (as No. 182); to Rome (as No. 121); to St. Petersburg (as No. 208); to Paris by bag.]

No. 514.

Sir R. Paget to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 31017/14/11/44.

(No. 52.)

Belgrade, D. August 2, 1911.

Sir,

R. August 8, 1911.

In my despatch No. 26 Confidential of the 11th April last⁽¹⁾ I reported that Montenegro had enquired of the Servian Government how they would regard a proposal for joint action in Albania and Macedonia. I now learn from Monsieur

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 450-2, No. 470.]

Yovanovitch the Secretary-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs that within the last few days the Montenegrin Government have addressed a somewhat similar enquiry, this time, to the Servian, Bulgarian and Greek Governments desiring to know what would be their attitude in the event of Montenegro declaring war against Turkey.

The Servian Government have replied that they would most strongly deprecate anything of the sort and that it is their earnest hope that the Montenegrin Government will not think of embarking on hostilities. The tenour of the Bulgarian reply, Monsieur Yovanovitch said is practically the same, but he was unaware as to the answer given by the Greek Government.

Monsieur Yovanovitch was on the whole inclined to take a pessimistic view of the situation and pointed out that the Turks appeared to be showing greater reluctance about making concessions than three or four days ago. Since my interview with him, however, a Press telegram has announced that the Porte having given way on all points in dispute the Albanian insurrection may be considered at an end and therefore it seems needless to comment further on Monsieur Yovanovitch's views.

I have, &c.

R. PAGET.

No. 515.

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 92857/92857/11/7.

(No. 84.) Confidential.

Sofia, D. August 9, 1911.

Sir,

R. August 21, 1911.

I have the honour to report that I had a long conversation to-day with M. Gueshoff on the general situation, both in Bulgaria, in Macedonia and Albania.

As regards Bulgaria, His Excellency stated that, now that the Grand Sobranjé had been dissolved, the ordinary elections would take place in September, and he anticipated a Government majority. On my enquiring as to the proceedings of the Grand Sobranjé, concerning which I had the honour to report in my despatch No. 80 of July 28,⁽²⁾ His Excellency declared that the Government were quite satisfied with the changes that had been made in the Constitution and the work which had been accomplished. Both at the opening and the closure of the proceedings certain minor disagreeable incidents had occurred, and during the course of the debates several hostile remarks of a strong description had been made, but the conduct of the Opposition had not been any worse than that of the majority of Constitutional Assemblies in Europe, and in view of the fact that Bulgaria had been under the Turkish yoke for a period of nearly five hundred years, during which time every person in power, and every official had been considered as an antagonist and an enemy, he held that on the whole the demeanour of the Chamber had not been discreditable.

The Government had been able, in spite of opposition, to accomplish their task in the most satisfactory way for the Bulgarian Nation and the new constitutional changes agreed to by the Grand Sobranjé, on the one hand brought the constitution into accord with the new legal status of Bulgaria, and, on the other, it made that constitution one of the most progressive amongst European Nations.

As regards external politics, the President of the Council insisted, as he has always done in his conversations with me on his determination, as long as he remained at the helm, to maintain a peaceful policy. In order to do this he was obliged to be very patient and not ready to take offence. The Ottoman Government were often very trying, both as regards frontier incidents, Bulgarian interests in the Vilayets, the question of the escape of band-leaders, and other less important matters.

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch was sent to Vienna (as No. 62) on September 30.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 490-2, No. 509.]

M. Gueshoff added that he was convinced that his policy was in accord with that of the majority of his countrymen, who, he believed, wished to see their country considered as a factor on which all friends of peace in the Balkans could count.

To the above I replied that His Excellency had my best wishes for the continued success of his humanitarian and peaceful policy, and I can only here reiterate my opinion that M. Gueshoff will continue to use his very best endeavours to maintain peace, and, should a catastrophe occur, he would prefer resignation to war.

As regards the administration of Macedonia there was, he considered, no improvement and he again especially mentioned the unsatisfactory conditions prevailing in Monastir and Florina (see my despatch No. 82, Confidential, of July 27).⁽³⁾ I pointed out to his Excellency that the majority of the hot-heads of the Committee of Union and Progress resided at Monastir, and that, unless they got the entire upper hand, in which case serious trouble might be expected at Constantinople, it was likely they would be dispersed and the Vilayets eventually better governed.

We then touched on Albanian affairs, when the Minister for Foreign Affairs was good enough to inform me that a meeting of the leading Albanian Chiefs, both Mahommedan and Catholic, had been decided upon to take place at Bari in Italy, on the 23rd instant. This information I had the honour to telegraph to you to-day.⁽⁴⁾ M. Gueshoff had, I gathered, heard of this from his Consuls and Agents in Albania. He attached, he added, great importance to the result of this Conference, as the future of the Balkan situation depended on the decision arrived at. To this, I replied that it seemed to me that whatever the result of the conference, the Malissori question was, at any rate settled, and even in an extreme case, military operations could only be extended to Southern Albania. M. Gueshoff believes however, that the lull in Northern Albania is only temporary: speaking generally, he considers the outlook unsatisfactory but anticipates no disturbances in the immediate future.

Finally His Excellency wound up a lengthy conversation by referring to Austrian policy. He told me that he had reluctantly come to the conclusion that Austria intended eventually to descend to Salonica and that she was quietly, and as unobtrusively as possible, working for that end. A large autonomous Albania, full of disturbing elements, would accord with her views: she would eventually annex it, and thus find herself at the gates of her desired haven. I gather from these remarks that M. Gueshoff is not unacquainted with the Austrian scheme concerning which I had the honour to report to you in my despatch Very Confidential No. 81 of July 24th.⁽⁵⁾ I asked His Excellency if he had any evidence of his views: it was, he answered, too early to obtain direct evidence but certain people had been sounded in the direction he alluded to. I pointed out the great difficulties with which Austria would have to contend and the many conflicting interests which would have to be harmonised and conciliated. "Yes," he said, "I fully realise them, but I am convinced that the Archduke Franz Ferdinand has decided upon this policy in the future: he is obstinate and not easily moved." The Prime Minister went on to say that the King of Bulgaria and the Archduke were on bad terms and he foresaw no prospect of a reconciliation: they were both very ambitious men, and should anything happen to the Emperor of Austria he foresaw immediate trouble. Bulgaria never could and never would allow Austria to come further south, and he was sure that his countrymen would oppose such designs to the last.

I thanked M. Gueshoff for his frankness. His Excellency leaves shortly for a watering-place either in Germany or in Austria and will not return until after the Elections.

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced. It described the attitude of M. Guéšov to the Albanian rising and the steps taken to remedy shortcomings of Ottoman administration in Southern Albania. (F.O. 31012/14/11/44.)]

⁽⁴⁾ [Sir H. Bax-Ironside's telegram No. 16 of August 9, D 5.3 P.M., R. 9.30 P.M. It is not reproduced, as the contents are described in the despatch. (F.O. 31421/14/11/44.)]

⁽⁵⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 402-3, No. 510.]

A copy of this despatch will be sent to His Majesty's Ambassadors at Constantinople and Vienna by next Messenger.

I have, &c.

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

MINUTE.

Vienna with refer[en]ce (to our No. 57 of Aug[ust] 18th) ⁽⁶⁾ We have not yet had Sir F. Cartwright's views, but it looks as if there was some good foundation for the report that the dismemberment of Turkey is being discussed. The proposals as they stand would unite the Balkans in opposition to Austria, and would be opposed by Russia and Italy to the point of war. They may have come to the knowledge of Turkey and if they are the common talk of Sofia, it is improbable that they have not reached Constantinople. This may account for the change of tone recently reported and for the suddenly developed affection for the Triple Entente, and for the granting of the Malissori demands.

L. M.
E. G.

⁽⁶⁾ [Sir Edward Grey's despatch No. 57 of August 18, 1911 (F.O 31011/14/11/44), asked for Sir F. Cartwright's observations on Sir H. Bax-Ironside's despatch No. 81, sent to Vienna from Sofia. *v. supra*, pp. 492-3, No. 510, and *note* ⁽²⁾; and *cp.* immediately succeeding document and *infra*, pp. 503-4, No. 519.]

No. 516.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Marienbad, August 15, 1911.

Bax-Ironside has sent me a copy of his Despatch No. 81 Very Confidential of July 24th⁽²⁾ in which he reports that an Austrian Agent has been travelling lately in the Balkan States with a view to ascertaining the present state of affairs among them. That agent is Dr. von Baerenreither⁽³⁾ who has often been employed on such errands by Count Aehrenthal. This person came here quite recently and had several interviews with Milovanovitch, the Servian Premier, who is taking the cure in this place. The latter called on me a few days ago and stayed with me nearly two hours discussing the present situation of affairs in the Balkans. He told me some things which it may be worth while to report to you. According to him a widespread feeling exists in the Near East that the critical moment is approaching in that part of the world and he does not believe that the crisis can be put off much later than next spring. He says that the situation is quite changed from what it was two years ago; the danger then was that war might break out between Greece and Turkey or between Bulgaria and Turkey. In fact an organized attack would then have been made upon the Turkish Empire from without. The danger now is that the break up of the Turkish Empire will come from within, that the explosion will take place at Constantinople, and that it will be followed immediately by a general attack of the Balkan States upon the crumbling Ottoman Empire in Europe. Milovanovitch predicts that the struggle will continue throughout the winter between the Committee and the Moderates, that there will be conflagrations in Constantinople followed by public discontent and riots; that there will be political assassinations and that the Central Government will grow weaker and weaker till it sinks under public contempt. Then frontier incidents will occur, followed by more or less serious fighting; bands in ever increasing numbers will penetrate into Macedonia, and a state of war will arise without any official declaration of the same. According to him the Turkish Army will probably not attempt the offensive and as far as regards Servia will probably concentrate no further north than Uskub. Milovanovitch says the Turks have about

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. III of 1911.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 492-3, No. 510.]

⁽³⁾ [*sic.* Joseph M. Baernreither. *v. his Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, herausgegeben von J. Redlich. (Berlin, 1928. English translation 1930.)]

200,000 men in Europe, certainly not more, and the Balkan States build their hopes for success on the rivalry which is known to exist between Generals and Officers, who will look to their own personal interests and not to those of the State. As regards Mahmoud Shefket Pasha, Milovanovitch declares that they have reports at Belgrade from their Consul dating from the time when the former, Mahmoud Shefket, was Vali of Uskub and almost an unknown person, to the effect that Mahmoud was a man of weak character and only a soldier well grounded in theoretical work.

I asked Milovanovitch whether he expected that this autumn there would be a great movement of bands in Macedonia. He replied "No," because the population knew that if they encouraged the bands the Turks would move the troops from Albania, now that peace is restored there, to Macedonia and that with the troops would come the cholera which they greatly feared.

I see from Bax-Ironside's Despatch above referred to that the idea is gaining ground among Balkan politicians that Aehrenthal is planning the creation of a great autonomous Albania in the event of the break up of the Turkish Empire in Europe. I believe this supposition is correct and you may remember that after my last interviews with Aehrenthal just before he left for the Tyrol on July 22nd I reported by telegram⁽⁴⁾ that he had expressed himself to me as sympathetic to the Albanians and as not opposed to the creation of an Autonomous Albania; but that the Albanians must have patience for the present and bide their time. Aehrenthal never throws out a hint of this kind without careful preparation beforehand and these hints are generally intended to justify him later on in saying "I warned you of this at such and such a time." I always remember one of the remarks made to me by Aehrenthal in the early days of my intercourse with him. "There are many things which I cannot tell you. It is for you to understand them." I also believe, as Bax-Ironside reports, that Aehrenthal would be inclined, if he helped to create an autonomous Albania, to create one having a large area. A small Albania would be too weak to resist the encroachments of Serbia and Bulgaria upon her and would therefore be a continual source of danger to the peace of the Near East. It would also help to solve the Salonika problem, for that port, according to Austrian ideas, cannot belong to anybody but Turkey and a free road to it passing through an Albanian State would I think suit Austria better than a road passing through an extended Serbia.

The idea of the creation of a big Albania is strongly objected to by the Servian Premier.

Milovanovitch told me that not long ago he had an interview with the King of Roumania and the latter told him that Roumania wanted two things in the case of a break up of the Turkish Empire:—(i) reasonable territorial compensation from Bulgaria, by which he meant a slight rectification of the Dobrudja frontier and possibly the cession of Silistria, but he did not wish to add any large portion of the Bulgarian population to the Kingdom of Roumania. (ii) *the essential point*—namely—that Bulgaria should not be allowed to grow too big: her ambitions in Macedonia must be limited, if not, Roumania would have to fight. But it was a *sine qua non* of Roumania's policy that a kind of balance of power among the minor States of the Balkans should be maintained. This tallies with what Bax-Ironside says, that Aehrenthal knows that the Roumanian Government would strongly disapprove of any diminution of the area of the present Servian Kingdom; and it may be Aehrenthal's knowledge of King Carol's views with regard to the balance of power in the Balkans that has led him to work out the idea of possibly creating a big Albania. . . .⁽⁵⁾

Your truly,

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

⁽⁴⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 489-90, No. 508.]

⁽⁵⁾ [The rest of this letter refers in general terms to Austro-Hungarian relations with Servia, the Moroccan situation, and Austro-Hungarian internal affairs.]

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 34721/32857/11/7.

(No. 86.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sofia, D. August 28, 1911.

R. September 4, 1911.

With reference to my despatch No. 84 Confidential of the 9th instant.⁽²⁾ I have the honour to report that M. Gueshoff informed me that he had discussed the question of the Austrian menace with Assim Bey. Whilst confirming his previous views His Excellency stated that he had endeavoured to impress the Turkish Minister with the necessity for Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia to arrive at an "Entente" in view of a common enemy. Assim Bey, His Excellency continued, whilst agreeing in principle with this suggestion, stated that as regards Greece, he could see but little hope of any agreement being arrived at until the Cretan Question was settled. Turkey neither would, nor could, allow Crete to fall into the hands of Greece. As regards the maintenance of friendly relations between Turkey and Bulgaria, both the Prime Minister and Assim Bey had continually worked to this end, and as long, at any rate, as the former remained in office, the present situation would not deteriorate, but M. Gueshoff now believed that something more was required.

I said it appeared to me that, as his Excellency had at length taken decided views concerning Austrian designs, the first and most essential point was to establish an "Entente" with Servia. The latter would, I felt sure, seize the hand of friendship if held out by Bulgaria. A further move south by Austria meant the extinction of Servia and the further domination of Bulgaria. The latter, in fact, save in so far as her seaboard existed, would find herself in the situation that Servia now was in, and Servia would inevitably sink to a mere "annexe" of the Dual Monarchy.

M. Gueshoff, whilst agreeing with the above, stated that as far as he was concerned he could see no reason why Bulgaria and Servia should not become cordial friends: unfortunately large numbers of his countrymen looked on Servia as a "Quantité négligeable" as Bulgaria had come out as so easy a victor in the late war. He would, however, on his return from his autumn holiday review the whole situation and discuss it later with the Servian Minister who is now on leave.

Both the Greek Minister and the Servian Chargé d'Affaires called on me and informed me that M. Gueshoff had spoken to them of the danger of Austrian policy. The latter stated that in the course of the five years he had spent in this Capital this was the first time a Bulgarian Prime Minister had spoken in this sense, that he drew from it a happy augury, and he trusted that franker "pourparlers" between the Representatives of the Balkan States would ensue.

It is understood that His Majesty the King will visit the Austrian Emperor again, probably at Ischl, and it is undoubtedly the case that His Majesty's constant long absences in Austria and Hungary cause dissatisfaction here and arouse suspicions as to His Majesty's future intentions.

Copy of this despatch will be sent to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople by next Messenger.

I have, &c.

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

MINUTES.

It will not do for Sir H. Bax-Ironside to get too much involved in these discussions and he had better abstain from giving advice.

L. M.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 497-9, No. 515.]

It should be said to him that it would be desirable while continuing to get all the information possible to avoid giving advice or expressing opinions to representatives of the Balkan States⁽³⁾

E G

⁽³⁾ [This was done by a private letter to Sir H. Bax-Ironside, dated September 8, from Mr Louis Mallet. (F.O. 34721/32857/11/7.)]

No. 518.

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 34723/34723/11/7.

(No. 88.) Very Confidential.

Sofia, D. August 31, 1911.

Sir,

R. September 4, 1911.

I hear, from what I consider a trustworthy source, that negotiations are proceeding for the conclusion of a secret Military Convention between Russia and Bulgaria.

As you are without doubt aware, Russian Military Attachés are, in fact, Military Agents, responsible to the Russian War Office and not under the orders of their accredited Ministers.

The former Russian Agent, Col[onel] Léontieff, entered into negotiations with the Bulgarian Military Staff, some three years ago, to conclude a Convention with Bulgaria in the event of a war with Turkey. The idea at that time was that the Bulgarian Army should occupy Thrace, that the Russians should land at Varna and march for Adrianople. The death of M. Sementowsky, the late capable Russian Minister at this Capital, the departure of Col[onel] Léontieff and the continued "Rapprochement" between King Ferdinand and Austria, delayed the completion of the previous plan. Since 1907-8 the situation has changed. The Bulgarian Military Authorities, should war be declared, have decided upon an immediate advance to Constantinople with their entire forces. Under the Convention now being drawn up, the Russians would land troops at Bourgas, occupy the valley of the Maritza and march North, thus keeping Roumania in check should the necessity arise.

It appears that L[ieutenant]-Col[onel] Romanowsky, successor to Col[onel] Léontieff, began to work on these lines on his arrival here in June last, apparently unknown to M. Nekludow, the Russian Minister.

Owing to the constant visits of General Fitcheff, Chief of the Staff, accompanied by Col[onel] Romanowsky and leading Bulgarian officers to Bourgas, some of the foreign Military Attachés got suspicious, and their suspicions were increased on hearing that experimental trials were being made for landing troops, stores etc. at Bourgas; other circumstances tended to confirm their suspicions. M. Nekludow was, perhaps indiscreetly, approached on the subject and he denied it "in toto." It appears however, that he mentioned the matter to Col[onel] Romanowsky, who then told the Minister what was going on.

On the Bulgarian side, King Ferdinand is the prime mover in this departure; whilst at present intriguing in Austria, His Majesty and General Fitcheff have been daily exchanging lengthy cypher telegrams. Two Bulgarian Colonels were to attend the Russian Manœuvres, but at the last moment General Fitcheff left himself for Petersburg, and he was to-day received in audience by the Emperor of Russia.

Personally, I do not anticipate that these negotiations will, at any rate in the immediate future, arrive at any practical result. King Ferdinand will not commit himself either to Russia or Austria until the last moment, and he is engaged in carrying on his usual intrigues.

On the arrival of my Military Attaché I will not fail to acquaint him with the state of affairs and put him in touch with my informants, from whom he will be able to obtain more complete military details.

I have, &c.

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

MINUTES.

The story illustrates well the lack of unity in the Russian service, which, however, is sometimes convenient, as it enables an official of one branch to deny, without telling a lie, all knowledge of some negotiation being carried on by an official of another.

H. N.

Sept. 6, 1911.

These preparations are made in view of Turco-Bulgarian hostilities, but the whole situation has been profoundly modified by the revelation of Austrian designs.

L. M.

E. G.

No. 519.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 34728/14/11/44.

(No. 148.) Confidential.

Sir,

Vienna, D. August 31, 1911.

R. September 4, 1911.

With reference to your despatch No. 57 of the 18th instant,⁽²⁾ asking for my views with regard to Sir H. Bax-Ironside's despatch No. 81, very confidential, of July 24th last.⁽²⁾ I have the honour to make the following observations.

The Austrian Agent who is reported to have been at Sofia is, I believe, Dr. Von Baerenreither, an Austrian ex-Minister, and a man frequently used by Count Aehrenthal for such special missions in the Balkans. I have reasons to believe that besides Dr. von Baerenreither some twenty or thirty Austrian agents, mostly military, have been studying and surveying the valleys along which the frontiers of a great autonomous Albania may some day pass. All this means that the Austro-Hungarian Government are accumulating a mass of information with regard to Balkan matters which will be of use to them should the day come when the geography in the Near East may have to be remoulded. Dr. von Baerenreither, after his return from Sofia, came to Marienbad where he has more than once seen Dr. Milovanovitch, the Servian Premier.

I had the opportunity of having a long conversation with Dr. Milovanovitch during my stay in Marienbad, in the course of which His Excellency observed that a widespread feeling existed at the present moment in the Near East that the critical moment was approaching in that part of the world, and that he did not believe that the crisis could be put off much later than next spring. He declared that the situation was quite different from that which existed two years ago; the danger then was that war might break out between Greece and Turkey, or between Bulgaria and that country. In fact, an organized attack would then have been made upon the Turkish Empire from without. The danger now lay in the probable breaking up of the Turkish Empire from within. The explosion would occur at Constantinople and it would immediately be followed by a general attack of the Balkan States upon the crumbling Ottoman Empire in Europe. Dr. Milovanovitch predicted that the struggle would continue throughout the winter between the Young Turk Committee

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 492-3, No. 510, and note ⁽²⁾.]

and the Moderates, that there would be conflagrations in Constantinople, followed by public discontent and riots; that there would be political assassinations and that the Central Government would grow weaker and weaker till it finally sank under public contempt. Then frontier incidents would occur, followed by more or less serious fighting; bands in ever increasing numbers would penetrate into Macedonia, and a state of war would arise without any official declaration of the same. According to Dr. Milovanovitch the Turkish army would probably not attempt to take the offensive, and as far as regarded Serbia, it would probably concentrate no further north than U'skub.

I see from Sir H. Bax-Ironside's despatch above referred to that the idea is gaining ground among Balkan politicians that Count Aehrenthal is planning the creation of a great autonomous Albania in the event of the break-up of the Turkish Empire in Europe. I believe this supposition to be correct, and I may remind you that after my last interviews with Count Aehrenthal, just before he left for the Tyrol on July 22[n]d, I reported to you in my telegram No. 81 of July 21st last,⁽³⁾ that His Excellency had expressed himself to me as sympathetic to the Albanians, and as not opposed to the creation of an autonomous Albania. Count Aehrenthal, however, added that the Albanians must have patience and bide their time.

I am also inclined to believe that Count Aehrenthal would favour the creation of an autonomous Albania with a large area, as I think he would consider that a small Albania would be too weak to resist the encroachments of Serbia and Bulgaria upon her, and that she would therefore be a continual source of danger to the peace of the Near East. This would also help to solve the Salonica problem, for that port—according to Austrian ideas—cannot belong to anybody but Turkey and a free road to it passing through an Albanian State would, I think, suit Austria better than a road passing through an extended Serbia. The idea of the creation of a big Albania is, however, strongly objected to by the Servian Premier.

Dr. Milovanovitch told me that not long ago he had an interview with the King of Roumania, and the latter told him that Roumania wanted two things in the case of a break-up of the Turkish Empire:—(1) reasonable territorial compensation from Bulgaria, by which His Majesty meant a slight rectification of the Dobrudja frontier and possibly the cession of Silistria, but he did not wish to add any large portion of the Bulgarian population to the Kingdom of Roumania; (2) *the essential point*—namely, that Bulgaria should not be allowed to grow too big; her ambitions in Macedonia must be limited, if not, Roumania would have to fight. But it was a "sine qua non" of Roumania's policy that a kind of balance of power among the minor States of the Balkans should be maintained. This tallies with what Sir H. Bax-Ironside says, that Count Aehrenthal knows that the Roumanian Government would strongly disapprove of any diminution of the area of the present Kingdom of Serbia; and it may be Count Aehrenthal's knowledge of King Carol's views with regard to the balance of power in the Balkans that has led him to work out the idea of the possible creation of a big Albania.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

MINUTE.

Everything depends on the internal situation of Turkey. If constitutional Gov[ernmen]t disappears, the power may be seized by a Military dictator and this might upset M. Milovanovitch's calculations.

I. M.
E. G.

(3) [*v. supra*, pp. 489-90, No. 508.]

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35611/14/11/44.

(No. 262.)

Sir,

Berlin, D. September 8, 1911.

R. September 11, 1911.

Monsieur Milovanovitch, the Servian Minister of Foreign Affairs, who has just returned from Russia, called on me to-day. He said that he was very pleased with everything he heard and saw in Russia. Everything seemed to be working smoothly—Emperor, Government and Army and Navy were in complete harmony; internal affairs were giving no trouble; and Russia had again a foreign policy and was again taking an interest in the Balkans—and especially in Servia. He had much to say on the subject of Albania and he told me that by a process of exclusion he had arrived at the conviction that Austria was at the bottom of the Albanian troubles. Russia had spoken severely to the King of Montenegro and threatened to withdraw financial assistance unless he ceased to encourage the Albanians. Italy had done the same and had even paid Garibaldi not to go to their assistance. England, though not directly interested, had done all she could to get the Powers to interfere and put a stop to the Albanian troubles, but Austria? She had temporized and refused to interfere on various grounds and there was no doubt in his mind that she had, if not instigated, done all she could to protract and give life to the movement. The idea for which she was working was not the autonomy of Albania proper, but the creation of an autonomous Albanian State which should include the three Vilayets and which, as her creation, would be entirely under her influence. I said that it seemed to me that the Turks would have something to say to that but he said that the Young Turks were doomed; that a new revolution was not far off and that Austria would profit by the opportunity to put her designs into execution. As regards Germany, he said that it was quite true that she was not at all in favour of the Austrian design and that this was one of the reasons why there was a certain coldness between these two countries. The alliance would of course be upheld, but there was no doubt that there was not the same cordiality as there used to be between the two countries. Count Aehrenthal was too independent to suit Germany's book and it was now no more like the old days when, if Count Goluchowski was asked a question, he never answered it until he had consulted Berlin.

Monsieur Milovanovitch said that in the recent arrangement made by the Turks with the Albanians there were many provisions which the Ottoman Government will find it impossible to carry out and that that fact, combined with the spirit of vendetta which still prevails among the Albanians renders it almost a certainty that the insurrection will again break out in the spring. Moreover Austria, who had innumerable emissaries throughout Albania, would take good care that the inhabitants did not forget their grievances.

He added that if Servia and Bulgaria could cease from their continual bickerings and realize their strength if united, Austria might find it difficult to realize her ideas; but unfortunately this was not the case, and Austria, who had for the moment hypnotized King Ferdinand, was doing all in her power to keep the two countries apart. He could not believe that His Majesty's Government would view with much favour the realization of the idea of a big Albanian State under Austrian influence and they might do much to prevent it by pointing out both at Sofia and Belgrade how much it would strengthen the position and influence of both countries in the Balkans if they could bury their little differences and become real friends.

I do not know how far, in his description of Austrian designs, Monsieur Milovanovitch was speaking from actual knowledge or mere supposition, but I thought

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

it might be of interest to record his remarks, as he is a man of considerable shrewdness and intelligence, and is generally pretty well informed as to what is going on in the Near East.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

MINUTES.

We have heard this story before from several different quarters and it is practically certain that it is not unfounded.

Austria would not find it at all impossible to square Germany and support in Morocco would certainly come into the price she would have to pay. Austria would not like this as she wishes to be on good terms with France but presumably would acquiesce in view of the magnitude of the other interests which she would have at stake.

H. N.

Sept[ember] 12, 1911.

We had much better not give advice. Austrian designs are unlikely to be successful, in any case without modification, as the whole Peninsula including Turkey would oppose them.

L. M.

We should certainly abstain from giving any advice.

A. N.

E. G.

No. 521.

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 40564/39697/11/7.

(No. 100.) Confidential.

Sofia, D. October 12, 1911.

Sir,

R. October 16, 1911.

The news of the Italian ultimatum,⁽²⁾ followed by the rupture of diplomatic relations, and the outbreak of war between Turkey and Italy was received here with calm.

The Bulgarian Government were, at first, somewhat anxious as to the possibility of an Austrian advance into the Sandjak.

They received information from their Consul at Uskub that a large number of Austrians, some of whom are officers in active employ, are in Novi Bazar: a few have gone as far as Prishtina. It must be borne in mind that a certain portion of the inhabitants of the Sandjak openly regret the departure of the Austrian troops. During the occupation they brought money into the country and their departure has been seriously felt, from a pecuniary point of view, both by the inhabitants of the small town of Novi Bazar, and of the larger villages such as Sienitzza, Tashlidja, Prepolie and Novi Varoch.

As I had the honour to report, however, on the 3rd instant,⁽³⁾ the Austrian Minister, acting under instructions which he had received from Count Aehrenthal, made a communication to the effect that His Excellency sincerely trusted that the "status quo" would be maintained in European Turkey.

To this the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that in no case would Bulgaria be the first to move; that the Government was most peacefully inclined and that they would remain quiet unless interests which they considered vital were threatened.

M. Teodoroff informed me that they would consider an Austrian move to Novi Bazar as a vital interest and they would reply by advancing on Uskub.

At the same time the Italians appear to have given publicity to a telegram which was sent to the Italian Representatives in the Balkan States instructing them to

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 282-8, No. 248.]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced. This telegram (No. 19) contained the information given in greater detail above, and was repeated to Constantinople. (F O. 38753/30691/11/7.)]

urge the Governments to which they were accredited to maintain the "status quo." Count Bosdari did not make a communication to this effect to the Bulgarian Government, although he received orders to do so. He telegraphed, I understand, to the Marquis di San Giuliano asking for permission to withhold the message in view of the peaceful attitude of the Bulgarian Government. This request was presumably granted, and the Italian Minister's influence has benefited accordingly.

Meanwhile the action of the Duke of Abruzzi at Prevesa,⁽¹⁾ followed by the annoyance shown by Austria at Italian action in the Adriatic, made it seem doubtful here whether the "status quo" would be maintained. The action of the Austrian Minister, however, has had a calming effect.

M. Panas became apprehensive of Turkish action on the Greek frontier, but he was eventually reassured by a satisfactory report from his Greek Colleague at Constantinople.

The Bulgarian Government have continued lately to receive reports of the mobilization of three of the Turkish Army Corps quartered in European Turkey and of the reinforcement of the Turkish frontier posts, and on receiving a circumstantial report from the Bulgarian Consul at Adrianople as to the movements of the Adrianople Army Corps, the Government instructed their Representatives at the Capitals of the Great Powers to inform the Governments to which they are accredited, of the Turkish action, with a view to having representations made at Constantinople. They also instructed M. Sarafoff to interview the Grand Vizier, and the Foreign Ambassadors, and to state that if immediate orders were not given for the cessation of the mobilization, the Bulgarian Government would be obliged, although most unwillingly, to act in a similar manner.

M. Teodoroff informed me that the question of Turkish mobilization had been discussed between Assim Bey and himself just before the former's departure and that the Turkish Minister had declared to him that he would exert his influence to put a stop to it, if the reports were true.

As Assim Bey has now accepted the post of Minister for Foreign Affairs at Constantinople he will be able to explain personally to his Colleagues in the Cabinet the position here, and his explanations should have a calming effect on them.

The Turkish Chargé d'Affaires called at the Ministry on the 10th instant, and assured M. Teodoroff that the movements of troops in the Vilayet of Adrianople were not to be considered as in any sense hostile to Bulgaria, and Refik Bey informed me that he had done his utmost to prevent any action of a military description being taken by the Bulgarian Government.

As I had the honour to telegraph to you in my telegram No. 22 of the 11th instant,⁽²⁾ M. Teodoroff assured me yesterday that the Bulgarian Government will await the result of the action of the Great Powers at Constantinople and the return of M. Gueshoff, before military preparations of any description are undertaken. If they are eventually obliged to act, by public opinion, such action will be that of filling the 'cadres' with time-expired men.

The French Minister has sent somewhat alarming news of the situation here to Paris, but M. Paléologue is by nature an alarmist.

M. Gueshoff is due back to-day and I shall take the first opportunity of arranging an interview with him.

Copy of this despatch will be sent to Constantinople by next messenger.

I have, &c.

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 294-5, No. 261. The Duke d'Abruzzi was in command of the Second division of an Italian squadron.]

(²) [Not reproduced. This telegram contained the information given above, and referred to the dissatisfaction of the Bulgarian Government with regard to the attitude of Turkey. It was repeated to Constantinople. (F.O. 39997/39697/11/7.)]

Sir R. Paget to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 42712/42712/11/39.

(No. 67.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. October 19, 1911.

R. October 30, 1911.

During the night of the 16th of October orders were issued by the Minister of War for mobilization in four Communes of the Drina Division, and Servian Officers abroad were summoned to return without delay.

As these measures not unnaturally caused some surprise, I yesterday enquired of M. Milovanovitch whether they were being adopted in connection with anything in the political situation. His Excellency informed me that this was merely a partial test mobilization undertaken as no manœuvres had taken place this autumn and that it had no further significance whatever. The reservists made "acte de présence," and were immediately dismissed.

M. Milovanovitch then told me that he learnt from private advices that Austria was massing more troops than seemed necessary on the frontier of the Sandjak. Up to date they had close upon 80,000 men there, besides which the divisions both at Agram and Temesvar were fully prepared for mobilization. The Austrian Minister when questioned had denied the truth of the reports but nevertheless confirmatory information continued to reach the Servian Government. The explanation of the movement of troops given by the Austrian Military Authorities is that recruits are being drafted to relieve the time-expired men but this explanation M. Milovanovitch considers somewhat doubtful. He also views with some suspicion King Nicholas' trip to the Montenegro-Herzegovina frontier at the present moment.

There are, further, rumours that the Turkish Authorities have been distributing arms to the Mahommedan population on the Servian-Turkish frontier. The Porte has denied this but the Servian Government state they have reason to believe that they are well founded.

I have, &c.

RALPH PAGET.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 42673/39697/11/7.

(No. 104.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sofia, D. October 21, 1911.

R. October 30, 1911.

With reference to my despatch No. 100 Confidential,⁽²⁾ I have the honour to report that M. Gueshoff returned on the 12th instant.

On the morning of the 13th the French Minister and the Russian Chargé d'Affaires called on the Prime Minister and Prince Ouroussoff came to this Legation immediately after the interview. The Prince stated that he had found M. Gueshoff pessimistic, worried, and excited: that he had informed him that the news received by the Bulgarian Government from Macedonia as to Turkish mobilization was far from satisfactory: that his colleagues were all anxious for an immediate partial

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to Constantinople.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 506-7, No. 521.]

mobilization and that, although he was personally opposed to such a course of action, he would most probably have to give way in view of the strong trend of public opinion.

M. Gueshoff then asked the Russian Chargé d'Affaires to obtain from the Russian Government a guarantee of the sincerity of the assurances of the Turkish Government. He required such a guarantee to strengthen his hands.

Prince Ouroussoff replied that the Great Powers were already, as the Prime Minister was aware, taking steps at Constantinople to obtain the necessary assurances of peace and of a cessation of warlike operations from the Ottoman Government and it appeared to him that such a guarantee as the one now asked for would be very difficult of attainment. To an enquiry as to who had originated this suggestion, M. Gueshoff did not conceal the fact that M. Paléologue had done so. Thereupon Prince Ouroussoff stated to M. Gueshoff that in his opinion the French Minister was putting him, the Prime Minister, in a difficult position. If the guarantee were not forthcoming, which seemed probable, his colleagues in the Cabinet would say, "You must now agree to mobilize as we cannot rely on Turkish assurances alone," and he would have to give way to their demands. On the other hand, if the guarantee were forthcoming, would the Cabinet be satisfied? It seemed doubtful.

Prince Ouroussoff then expressed himself to me as very dissatisfied with the conduct of the French Minister, who had, he considered, lost his head and acted without consideration for France's ally. He asked me if I would not go to see the Prime Minister at once and endeavour to calm him and persuade him to withdraw his formal request for a guarantee.

I replied that as M. Gueshoff intended to transmit his request through the Representatives of the Great Powers, he would doubtless send for me: that in any case I had not been instructed to advise the Prime Minister as to his course of action, and that, should he send for me, I could only tell him that the news of the mobilization of the Adrianople Army Corps was, I had been informed, untrue and that the accounts received by His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople and, I believed also, by the other Governments, as to Turkish action in the Vilayets, were satisfactory.

In the course of the afternoon I received from M. Gueshoff a message asking me to call at the Ministry. He began by describing his situation as a most difficult one, and he formally asked me to transmit to you his wish to obtain from the Great Powers a guarantee of the sincerity of the assurances of the Turkish Government.

He handed me a paper in M. Paléologue's handwriting which, so far as my memory serves me, ran as follows: "En transmettant au Gouvernement Bulgare les assurances de la Turquie, les Puissances devraient garantir à la Bulgarie la sincérité de ses assurances et que par suite, la Bulgarie ne sera pas attaquée."

In handing the paper to me M. Gueshoff said that it had originated with the French Minister. I made no remark beyond saying I would inform you of its contents. He then asked me if I had any news as to Turkish military preparations to which I replied in the sense of Sir Gerard Lowther's telegrams No. 252⁽³⁾ and 262⁽⁴⁾ to you, copies of which His Excellency had been good enough to supply me with. M. Gueshoff asked me whether I believed that the Turkish Army Corps at Adrianople has been mobilized and I informed him that the information received by our Ambassador at Constantinople from His Majesty's Consul at that town was to the effect that it had not been mobilized.

M. Gueshoff thanked me for this information. He had, he added, received news to the same effect from other Representatives and from the Turkish Chargé d'Affaires but unfortunately the Bulgarian Agents on the frontier sent information of a more alarming description. He then told me that he himself would prefer resignation to unjustified mobilization.

On the 15th instant (Sunday) I received a visit from the French Minister who was much excited. He informed me that he did not believe that M. Gueshoff

(3) and (4) [Not reproduced. Both these telegrams insisted that the Turkish military preparations were exaggerated, and that the Ottoman attitude to Bulgaria was pacific. (F.O. 39674/39697/11/7 and F.O. 40159/39697/11/7.)]

would await the answer of the Great Powers, but that a partial mobilization would be ordered for the next day. He himself had had two interviews with the Prime Minister in the course of the day, and had used all his influence to urge him to await the answer of the Powers before taking any action. I made no remarks in reply to M. Paléologue's observations beyond stating that the situation seemed to me calmer. The same evening I heard that the King had for the fourth time postponed his return and I gather from this that he intends to leave the responsibility of dealing with the situation to the Prime Minister, whose action he will disavow or not as best suits him.

On the 16th instant M. Gueshoff sent me a copy of a despatch from the Bulgarian Consul at Adrianople, dated the 15th instant, copy of which I have the honour to enclose herewith.⁽⁵⁾

This despatch reports in a somewhat more unfavourable light on military movements in Macedonia and especially in the Vilayet of Adrianople than the news conveyed in the report of His Majesty's Consul at Adrianople to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople leads one to expect.

On the 17th instant Refik Bey again called at the Ministry and, besides conveying personal friendly messages from Assim Bey to M. Gueshoff, he brought official assurances, of the strongest description, to the effect that all movements of troops on the frontier would be at once stopped and that the actual "Status quo" would be maintained.

This news was at once made public, on the same evening, with Refik Bey's consent. A Cabinet Council was then held at which it was decided to accept these assurances as satisfactory. On the 18th instant,⁽⁶⁾ I had the honour to telegraph that, unless fresh complications arose, the crisis might be considered as passed.

On the 19th instant, the French Minister called and asked me whether I had received any instructions in the sense of my telegram No. 23 of October 13,⁽⁷⁾ and both he and my Russian Colleague have continued to speak to me on the matter, adding that they had received instructions to act with me, and, in the case of the Russian, I gathered also with his Austrian and German Colleagues.

To-day I had the honour to report to you that the crisis was officially considered as over.⁽⁸⁾

Copy of this despatch will be sent to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople by next messenger.

I have, &c.

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

MINUTE.

This has been dealt with by telegraph. The action of the French Minister is explained in Sir H. Bax-Ironside's Desp[atch] No. 105 (42674).⁽⁹⁾

E. F. G.

R. P. M.

A. N.

⁽⁵⁾ [Not reproduced.]

⁽⁶⁾ [Not reproduced. It stated that the Turkish Government had given further assurances of peaceful intentions. (Telegram No. 26. F.O. 41075/39697/11/7.)]

⁽⁷⁾ [Not reproduced. It stated that the Bulgarian Prime Minister had approached the Representatives of the Powers to secure from their Governments a guarantee of the sincerity of the Turkish Government. (F.O. 40286/39697/11/7.)]

⁽⁸⁾ [Reported by telegram (No. 28) of October 21. (F.O. 41520/39697/11/7.)]

⁽⁹⁾ [Not reproduced. It described the relations between M. Paléologue and the Stamboulovist party at Sofia of which M. Gennadiev was the leader. (F.O. 42674/39697/11/7.)]

Extract from the Annual Report on Turkey for the year 1911.

(Enclosure in Sir G. Lowther's Despatch No. 100, D. January 31, 1912,
R. February 5, 1912.)

F.O. 4966/4966/12/44.

Albania.

The Albanian question has again been very much to the front during the past year. At the beginning of the year the country was still in a state of agitation in consequence of Torgoud Pasha's recent expedition, and the Government soon gave fresh cause for discontent by endeavouring to enforce service in the territorial militia on all Albanians, whether or not they had passed the age for active service. The result was isolated acts of violence which in March developed into a regular revolt on the part of the Malissor tribes. The troops on the spot were quite insufficient to cope with the insurgents, and General Torgoud Pasha was therefore sent to Scutari with a force of ten battalions. Though he gained some unimportant successes, he was unable to put down the rebellion. The operations, an account of which will be found elsewhere in this report, continued throughout the month of May. At the beginning of June the Mirdites joined in the revolt. The spread of the rising, combined with the friendly warnings given to the Turkish Government by Russia and Austria, induced the Porte to adopt a more conciliatory attitude. A period of grace was given to the insurgents during which time the powers discussed the question of guaranteeing, as the Albanians desired, the Turkish Government's promises, and simultaneously negotiations were carried on between the Turkish Government, the insurgents, and the King of Montenegro. The Turkish Government made several offers of somewhat vague concessions. The refugees in Montenegro declared they would accept no concessions the fulfilment of which was not guaranteed by the Powers. Meanwhile, the Archbishop of Scutari was sent with the object of using his influence with the insurgents, to persuade them to accept the offer of the Turkish Government and to return home. M[onsieur] Sereggi, however, does not seem to have been at all enthusiastic about his mission, and it achieved no result. An end was finally put to the negotiations by the King of Montenegro. His Majesty drew up a list of proposed concessions for the acceptance of the Turkish Government. The latter substantially agreed to these proposals, and at the same time showed signs of being animated by a more conciliatory spirit by recalling Torgoud Pasha and replacing him by Abdullah Pasha. The acceptance by the Turkish Government of these proposals was the sign for a complete change of attitude on the part of the King of Montenegro. Hitherto His Majesty had maintained that it was impossible for him to advise the refugees to return home on the faith of the Turkish promises unless their fulfilment was guaranteed by the Powers. Now he ordered the refugees to leave the country. This *volte-face* on the part of King Nicholas was probably due to various causes. There is no doubt that the maintenance of the refugees had been a great burden to the Montenegrin exchequer, and this financial strain was apparently accentuated by the refusal of Russia to pay, pending the crisis, her usual subsidy to Montenegro. It is suggested that Count Aehrenthal also brought pressure to bear on Montenegro by promises of financial assistance. Finally, there appeared to be no hope of inducing the Powers to give a guarantee. King Nicholas, presumably, therefore decided to content himself with what prestige he had obtained as mediator. A communiqué appeared in the "Official Journal" at Cetinje stating that the concessions had been granted "on the intervention of the Montenegrin Government," and added that, in order to content the Malissors, the Montenegrin Government had succeeded in obtaining from the Porte still further concessions, viz., recruits to be trained first in their own country; Malissors not living in towns to be allowed to carry arms, except in towns and markets; instruction in primary schools to be in

the language of the country; half a kilogram of maize to be given daily to each individual till next harvest, and £T. 1 to be given to each adult.

The majority of the refugees were very unwilling to return without any other guarantee than the word of the Turkish Government. The latter, however, at first carried out their part of the agreement fairly well, and the various difficulties which arose were satisfactorily settled. But the concessions involved a considerable expenditure on the part of the Turkish Government. They have in this respect not fully carried out their promises, and the vali has had great difficulty in contenting the Malissors with the sums sent to him from Constantinople.

Though the Mirdites have remained quiet, thanks to the assurances given them that their ancient privileges and immunities would be restored and maintained, the general situation in Albania is, at the close of the year, far from satisfactory. The apparent success of the Malissors has given currency to the idea that concessions are only to be extracted from the Turkish Government by a revolt, and the villagers of the Zadrina, who formerly used to pay the agnam⁽¹⁾ and tithe on agricultural produce, seeing that the Government's attempt to force their neighbours to pay these taxes has at any rate momentarily failed, have begun to form bands with a view to obtaining a similar immunity. At the same time the Albanians have no confidence in the promises of the Government, and Moslem and Christian alike are doing everything to secure arms with a view to a fresh rising when the next occasion offers.

There is no doubt that the Malissors hoped that the revolt, premature though it was, would be the signal for a general conflagration in south as well as north Albania. The Government, however, took immediate steps to prevent any extension of the rebellion, and at no moment was there any likelihood of it spreading to the south. The Tosks have indeed many causes of complaint, but at present there is no idea of an organised revolt. The beys are divided by local jealousies which the Albanian committee confess they have as yet been unable to overcome. Further, the Tosks, being wealthier than the Ghegs, have more to lose, and are therefore unwilling to join in any movement which does not seem to have a good prospect of success.

(¹) [*i.e.*, the tax on sheep.]

CHAPTER LXXVI.

THE MAKING OF THE BALKAN LEAGUE,
OCTOBER 23, 1911—AUGUST 22, 1912.

No. 525.

*Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir A. Nicolson.*Private and most Confidential.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Sofia, October 23, 1911.

A meeting took place between the Bulgarian and Servian Prime Ministers on the 11th instant during the return journey of the former from Vichy.

They travelled together in a special carriage from Belgrade to Lapovo. M. Milovanovitch was accompanied by the Servian Minister for Public Works and they left Belgrade together, nominally to open a bridge. In my despatch No. 84 Confidential of August 9th,⁽²⁾ I reported M. Gueshoff's views with regard to Austrian policy and in my despatch No. 86 Confidential of August 28th⁽³⁾ I informed Sir E. Grey of His Excellency's wishes in regard to a "Rapprochement" between Bulgaria & Servia.

M. Gueshoff made known his desire to meet M. Milovanovitch early in September, but it was not found possible to arrange an interview at an earlier date than the one determined. I have reason, however, to believe that as soon as M. Gueshoff's views were known in Belgrade, a quite temporary working arrangement was decided upon between the two Governments to avoid all complications in Albania, with the object of preventing any pretext for Austrian intervention and of bringing pressure on Cettigné to prevent the King of Montenegro repeating his policy of last year. Prior to the meeting of the two Prime Ministers, M. Rizoff, the Bulgarian Minister in Rome, was sent to Belgrade, when on leave, to discuss matters generally but he was not able to gain the confidence of the Servian Gov[ernmen]t, as he is known as a tool of the King of Bulgaria and M. Milovanovitch did not know at that time the views of King Ferdinand as to a "rapprochement." M. Gueshoff was, however, able to assure the Servian Premier that he had brought much pressure to bear on His Majesty lately in the sense indicated, and that he had been assisted by M. Teodoroff the Minister of Finance. These two both hoped and believed that the King was won over to their way of thinking and that he now saw that a friendly policy between the Balkan States, favourable to Russia and hence leaning towards the Triple Entente was preferable to the "jeu de bascule" H[is] M[ajesty] was still playing.

I have not gathered that this meeting was in any way inspired by a hostile feeling towards the Ottoman Gov[ernmen]t, in fact, quite the contrary as far as Servia is concerned, as she has many reasons for remaining on good terms with Turkey. The chief object in view was to limit the action of the Servian and Bulgarian propoganda [*sic*: propaganda] to certain definite districts, it to be tacitly understood for the future, that, in the event of a break up of European Turkey those districts should fall to the State which had been conducting an active propoganda in them at the time of the catastrophe. The two Prime Ministers decided that all efforts should be used to maintain the "status quo" at the present juncture unless Austria made an advance, especially as Russia had informed both Gov[ernmen]ts that she would not aid any forward movements on the Turkish frontier at the present time.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. V of 1911.]⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 497-9, No. 515.]⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 501, No. 517.]

This condition, you will notice, the Bulgarian Prime Minister has adhered to in spite of pressure.

M. Milovanovitch gave M. Gueshoff to understand that no working arrangement of a permanent character could ever be arrived at between the two Gov[ernmen]ts unless Uskub fell under Servian influence: Servia would also desire the Kiuprülü-Monastir line (excluding the latter town), together with Old Servia.

The Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t have hitherto considered that they have a claim to the Caza of Uskub, together with the town of the same name, the Caza of Velessa, together with the town of Velessa, marked on our maps as Kiuprülü, the Caza of Perlépé, and that portion of the Vilayet of Monastir which includes the Capital of the same name. This portion of European Turkey was understood to be the future lot of Bulgaria at the time of the Treaty of San Stefano. Here lies the bone of contention which has hitherto largely helped to keep the two countries apart.

M. Gueshoff agreed to cease Bulgarian propaganda in the Cazas of Koumanovo and Uskub—Servia to occupy Uskub when the time for partition came. Bulgaria would have Servia's consent to occupy Salonica and Monastir. The question of the future of Kiuprülü was left over for further consideration. All to the East of the Uskub-Kiuprülü-Monastir line was in the future to be under Bulgarian influence, to a line to be arranged with Greece at a later date.

The Prime Minister decided that every effort must be made to exclude both Italy and Austria from all territorial participation when the catastrophe arose, but, and this was made a particular point of by M. Milovanovitch, no action whatever was to be taken to weaken Turkey:—preferably a weak Turkey to a strong Austria. No advance is to be made by either party without the tacit consent of Russia.

M. Gueshoff also spoke in favour of more friendly and closer relations existing between Greece and Servia. He stated that Bulgaria and Greece were originally on very bad terms and no one could have supposed that their relations could have so rapidly improved. The Balkan States should, he said, work together, in face of Austria, the common enemy.

These remarks were sympathetically received.

No further negotiations are in progress at the present time, each Prime Minister being satisfied with what has already been done.

I consider that the seed of a future entente has been sown. It will not grow on the Bulgarian side unless M. Gueshoff or M. Daneff are in office, or unless serious danger threatens from the side of Austria.

King Ferdinand will remain an unknown factor until the last minute.

Yours sincerely,

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

No. 526.

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 44875/44875/11/7.

(No. 109.)

Sir,

Sofia, D. November 3, 1911.

R. November 13, 1911.

More than a year ago mention was made of the establishment of a Committee for the purpose of bringing about an economic "rapprochement" between Bulgaria and Servia.⁽¹⁾ The political Press has published from time to time the names of the

⁽¹⁾ [No reference to the establishment of this Committee can be traced in the archives of the Foreign Office.]

Servian or of the Bulgarian members of the Committee, presumably with the object of keeping the names of the initiators of the project before the eyes of the public. But up till now the two halves of the Committee have been unable to arrange a meeting, some difficulty invariably occurring at the last moment.

A report is now going the round of the Press, and has been confirmed to me by an authoritative source, that a meeting of this almost forgotten Committee is to take place at Sofia on the 7th instant.

In giving an assurance that the Servian members of the Committee will be most welcome guests in the Bulgarian capital, the Press here hint that any attempt to bring about the proposed "rapprochement" may not perhaps be received with any great acclamation either in Government circles or at the hands of the public; though it is admitted that any action tending to promote a friendly feeling between neighbouring peoples is, in itself, a thing much to be desired. In principle it would be foolish, if not actually unfriendly, to work against such an understanding; nor indeed does any Bulgarian opposition exist in fact.

Nevertheless in Bulgaria there are not a few who point out that the Servians entered upon the project with all zeal, while in this country on the other hand, a more sober spirit was shown, year-books of statistics were consulted and the action of Serbia recalled during the tariff difficulties with Austro-Hungary, and again during the negotiations for a customs union between Serbia and Bulgaria. It has been considered well that the truth should be known with regard to the proposed understanding, and the Bulgarians have come to recognise that Serbia might perhaps have dealings with the Committee in which questions of high policy might be involved. The opinion has gained ground that it should be clearly understood at Belgrade that at Sofia there is absolutely no intention of arriving, through the efforts of the Committee, at any but an economic understanding.

The chauvinistic aspirations, which are said to fill the heads of so many Servian members of the Committee, would most certainly not be welcomed at Sofia.

These views must, it is held here, be fully understood before the meeting of the committee, in order to prevent future disappointment and mutual recrimination. The general opinion is that the Committee will be more likely to fulfil its task and to attain its object if it confines its operations solely and entirely to the foreign trade of the two countries. Copy of this despatch has been sent to His Majesty's Minister at Belgrade.

I have, &c.

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

No. 527.

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 47206/44875/11/7.

(No. 118.)

Sir,

Sofia, D. November 14, 1911.

R. November 27, 1911.

With reference to my Despatch No. 109 of the 3rd instant,⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to report that the Serbo-Bulgarian Committee for the establishment of an understanding between the two countries met at Sofia on the 5th instant.⁽²⁾

After a statement that matters of high policy would not be discussed, the Committee declared that their object was to study economic questions, to point out their solution, and to foster the relations of the two peoples in order to bring about a more binding "rapprochement" in economic affairs.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

⁽²⁾ [Thus in original. cp. immediately preceding document.]

Amongst the objects put forward by the Committee were the following:—

To elucidate and facilitate a solution of the questions of Postal, Telegraph, Telephone, and Railway Tariffs: to facilitate and simplify the Commercial, Customs, and Frontier relations between Bulgaria and Servia: to unify commercial legislation, and fiscal law with regard to the enterprise of the two countries, and to arrive at a unity of social legislation and a mutual recognition of the school diplomas of the respective states: further, to attain a unification of judiciary law, and reciprocal assistance in decisions come to thereunder: and to cultivate a tendency towards a common policy in general, agrarian, and commercial matters.

A programme embodying the proposals outlined above was adopted by the Committee, who, after declaring that the identic interests of the other Balkan nations imposed similar action on their part, also made a warm appeal to all sincere friends of a Balkan general "rapprochement" to follow the example set them and to found a similar programme in all the Balkan States.

The officially inspired "Mr.," taking the proceedings of the Committee as its text, sees nothing in the programme which can conflict with the idea recently resuscitated at Constantinople of a general Balkan Confederation. The point of importance is that both there and here the economic interests of the Balkan peoples must be considered. But from what quarter soever the initiative of such a "rapprochement" may spring, it cannot but be favourably received in Bulgaria, where the belief that the peninsula can eventually belong to none but Balkan peoples is deeply rooted. On this basis friendship and a good understanding amongst all the minor States in the Near East are both possible and highly desirable.

So much for the cryptic comments of the officially inspired Press.

Other organs are much more outspoken and less diplomatic in their utterances. The past history of dealings with Servia is quoted as a warning that the present Servian overtures could not be trusted too far. The allusion is, it should perhaps be stated, to the fact that on a past occasion of negotiations for a Customs Agreement between the two countries Servia sought to use the opportunity to obtain Tariff concessions from Austria. Moreover, it is remembered that when the agreement had been enthusiastically welcomed by Bulgaria, Servia refused at the last moment to accept it.

It is admitted that in itself the idea of an understanding is desirable, but the only condition upon which it seems, in Bulgarian public opinion, possible is that there should be no deep-laid scheme underlying it.

In a word, the Bulgarians are inclined to think that Servia is using the proposed economic "rapprochement" as a stalking-horse, and that she really harbours ideas of far greater scope. They therefore do not believe that Servia is sincere in her declarations and there can be little doubt that Bulgarians on their side are far from sincere in the half-hearted welcome which they have accorded to the Declarations of the Committee.

A copy of this despatch will be forwarded to His Majesty's Minister at Belgrade.

I have, &c.

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

MINUTE.

Bulgaria is suspicious.

L. M.
A. N.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 49441/47882/11/7.

(No. 205.) Confidential.

Sir,

Vienna, D. December 5, 1911.

R. December 11, 1911.

I have the honour to report that King Ferdinand of Bulgaria has been here and that His Majesty has been received in semi-state by the Emperor. The King has also had a long interview with Count Aehrenthal, which has given rise to much comment, for the antipathy which the latter entertains for the King is well known. There seems to be little doubt that this time King Ferdinand has come to Vienna not merely of his own free will, but on a direct invitation which has been sent to him from here. What has brought this about and with what object in view Count Aehrenthal should have summoned His Majesty to Vienna, is a question which is much discussed here.

A few days ago Count Aehrenthal said to one of the foreign Ambassadors in Vienna that Europe lay exposed to two crises in the immediate future: one was the Near Eastern crisis which might be started at any moment by the Italo-Turkish war, and the second was the antagonism which existed between Great Britain and Germany which might soon lead to a catastrophe in the West. With regard to the second imminent crisis, Count Aehrenthal evidently intends to do his utmost to prevent the Dual Monarchy from being drawn into it, but as regards the first it is impossible for Austria-Hungary to keep out of it should it arise. Count Aehrenthal must therefore prepare his plans for all possible contingencies, even though he should prefer—as he does—that it should still be possible to maintain the “status quo” in the Balkans and Turkish power in an effective condition there. For a long time past Count Aehrenthal has striven to better the relations between Russia and Austria-Hungary with a view to arriving at an understanding with regard to their respective interests in the Near East, but although he has rendered these relations normal, he has not succeeded in making them cordial, and the Russian Government still look upon Count Aehrenthal with a certain amount of mistrust and suspicion. As events in the Near East are not likely to wait until Austro-Russian relations allow of a frank exchange of views with regard to Balkan matters, Count Aehrenthal finds it necessary, I suspect, to take what precautions he can to ensure that whatever happens the interests of the Dual Monarchy shall not be unfavourably affected by it. He has therefore summoned King Ferdinand to Vienna to enter into a deal with him as to the immediate future. The moment selected for doing this seems to be a propitious one:—Monsieur Tcharykoff, the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, has shown such an exaggerated affection for Turkey that it has created a certain amount of alarm in Bulgaria; moreover, the rumours which are current that he is desirous of negotiating the opening of the Straits to Russian men-of-war, has caused positive alarm in Bulgaria, as it implies in return that Russia is prepared to give Turkey a guarantee of the integrity of her dominions. Such a guarantee would place Russia in direct opposition to the national aspirations of the Bulgarians, and the very rumour that such a guarantee may possibly be given, has caused Bulgaria to turn towards Austria as to a welcome friend in adversity. Now this turning of Bulgaria towards Austria suits Count Aehrenthal's policy very well, and he has received the King with open arms.

The policy which Count Aehrenthal has steadily pursued towards Turkey has been, as is well known, to do nothing which could accelerate a crisis on the Bosphorus. I think that recent events may have somewhat modified his views. Early in the year, as mentioned in my telegram No. 12, of the 19th February last,⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 6083/6088/11/44.)]

Count Aehrenthal had expressed himself as thoroughly dissatisfied with the Young Turk régime, and to be looking forward to the prompt suppression of the same by a "coup d'état," carried out by Mahmoud Shevket Pasha and the military party. Since that time we have had the Albanian rising and the sharp warning addressed to the Turkish Government by Count Aehrenthal in the "Fremdenblatt" of June 8th.⁽²⁾ I have some reason to believe that of late he has been losing confidence in the capacity of the Turkish Commander-in-chief. The war in Tripoli has also helped to make him entertain doubts as to the stability of the Central Government at Constantinople. All this must lead him to meditate whether it is not well to be prepared to re-create a state of equilibrium in the Balkans should a crisis arise in which Turkey in Europe would go over board. To bring about such an equilibrium, in the event of a serious crisis arising, it is necessary that Austria and Bulgaria should clearly understand each other and settle definitely what aspirations of the latter Austria can allow to be realized without danger to herself. As is well known the nightmare under which Bulgaria has suffered of late has been the fear that, when she was engaged in a life and death struggle with Turkey, Austria would push Roumania upon her from behind and so checkmate her. To prevent this King Ferdinand has more than once attempted to negotiate directly with Roumania to see whether the two countries could not come to an understanding with regard to Macedonia, but every time he has done so he has encountered the secret opposition of Count Aehrenthal who disliked and distrusted His Majesty. Now that the King has come to Vienna on an invitation of Count Aehrenthal, it may be taken for certain that this question of the future attitude of Roumania towards Bulgaria will form one of the principal items of their conversations. I do not think it probable that Count Aehrenthal is prepared to plan with the King of Bulgaria the downfall of Turkey in Europe, but I deem it more than probable that Count Aehrenthal, having lost faith in the stability of the Turkish Empire, and foreseeing a possible crisis in the Near East, may go to the length of saying to the King:—"If a crisis should occur in the Near East, I will restrain Roumania from attacking you in the rear while you are engaged in your struggle with the Turks, on the understanding that you do not touch Salonika and that you give reasonable territorial compensation to Roumania in the Dobrudja or in the cession of Silistria, for which I will allow you to compensate yourself at the expense of Serbia by seizing the district of Pirot and a portion of Macedonia."

I think it is unfortunate that at this present moment the Russian Government should continue to encourage Serbia in her pursuit of an anti-Austrian policy. Here at the "Ballplatz," I am told, a considerable amount of annoyance has been created by the frankly hostile attitude assumed by the Russian Minister at Belgrade, M. de Hartwig, against Austria. As Russia is not prepared to do anything serious for Serbia, it seems a pity that that country, small as she is, should expose herself to the resentment of Austria-Hungary, and that resentment will soon show itself in a very effective way, should a crisis arise in the Near East, by Austria-Hungary opposing any serious increase of Serbia's territory at the expense of Turkey. Russia not being prepared to go to war with Austria, and having her attention called to events in China and in Persia, it is not likely that any of the Great Powers will do more than champion the cause of Serbia platonically if the division of the Turkish dominions in Europe should become necessary in the near future.

In conclusion, I would venture to say that I feel sure that Count Aehrenthal has made up his mind how he will act under every probable contingency which is likely to arise. Knowing his own mind, being near the field of action, and having the Austro-Hungarian army ready to march, he will occupy a commanding position which will enable him to settle the future destinies of the little Balkan States should Turkish rule in Europe come to an end. Would it not be well for Great Britain, France and Russia to exchange views with regard to these matters, and either come

(2) [*v. supra.* pp. 459-60. No. 476.]

to terms with Count Aehrenthal as to a possible joint action of the Powers in the Balkans in the event of trouble arising there, or to form a plan of action of their own to oppose that which will be pursued by Austria-Hungary in the event of a Near Eastern crisis arising?

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

MINUTE.

It would be a mistake for us to take an initiative in opposing Austria in the Balkans: it is for Russia to make up her mind as to what she wants and approach us if she wishes to do so. If we take an initiative in proposing a Balkan policy to Russia we shall be committed more deeply than it is necessary or wise for us to be committed in Balkan affairs.

E. G.

No. 529.

Sir W. Townley to Sir Edward Grey (1)

F.O. 49468/49468/11/37.

(No. 66.) Confidential.

Sir,

Bucharest, December 6, 1911.

The recent appointment of General Averesco as Chief of the Staff of the Roumanian Army has caused considerable comment in the press, and in military circles. The General was Minister of War in Monsieur Bratianu's administration,⁽²⁾ Seeing that the last-named statesman is today to all intents and purposes the leading spirit of the Cabinet, it is perhaps not unnatural that onlookers should ask themselves what has caused this sudden change in the Conservatives' estimation of General Averesco.

A somewhat circumstantial, though to all appearances quite improbable rumour having reached me from a military source to the effect that the appointment had been forced upon the Government by Germany, and that Roumania is making great military preparations in anticipation of what may occur in the Spring, I took the occasion, yesterday being the Minister for Foreign Affairs' reception day, to ask His Excellency if Roumania had lately received any disquieting information concerning the outlook in South Eastern Europe, as it had been reported to me that military preparations are being carried out on a large scale.

Monsieur Maioresco replied without a moment's hesitation that I had been misinformed, as Roumania is making no special war preparations, though, as I was aware, the King and his Government are extremely anxious as to the turn events may take in the Spring, unless the great Powers can devise some means by which an end may be put to the war between Turkey and Italy. Pointing to the deep snow outside:—"That," he said, "is our safeguard for peace in the Balkans for the present, but as long as hostilities continue," he added, "Roumania must remain on her guard." The King, Government, and people are all, he declared, fundamentally pacifically disposed, and truly anxious to maintain the excellent relations now existing with all the neighbouring states, but all, he asserted with considerable emphasis, are determined to maintain, with force if need be, Roumania's claims to consideration, should future events result in a greater Bulgaria, a greater Greece, or a greater Servia. We are well satisfied, His Excellency continued, with our present position, and our prosperous economic situation is sufficient guarantee

(1) [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

(2) [A sentence of a personal character is here omitted. The "last-named statesman" in the next sentence is M. Marghiloman.]

of our pacific intentions, but we must have our share if smaller nations around us are to acquire aggrandisement at Turkey's expense.

Inspired apparently by something I said as to the confidence that could be placed in his assurances, Monsieur Maioresco suddenly exclaimed:—"Yes, Carp (the Prime Minister) and I are old men, and we believe in complete frankness in Diplomacy." Speaking with great earnestness he continued, "You have doubtless heard of the agreement supposed to have been made by my predecessor and Monsieur Bratianu with Turkey. Such an agreement never did, never could and never can exist. Roumania is precluded by her natural position from tying her hands by any such agreement with any Power, quite apart from historical recollections of Turkey's connection with the united provinces."

Since seeing Monsieur Maioresco I have received your despatch No. 18 of the 2nd instant⁽³⁾ informing me of a report received from His Majesty's Ambassador at Vienna of a conversation between the French Ambassador and Count Aehrenthal. I would beg to add that the King of Roumania and the Cabinet fully share the anxiety expressed by King Ferdinand as to what may occur in the Balkans in the Spring, if the Turco-Italian war is allowed to drag on, or Turkey is seriously crippled.

Relations between this country and Bulgaria have certainly improved somewhat of late, but the friendly demonstrations shewn to Monsieur Diamandi, the late Roumanian Minister at Sofia, on his departure from his post, met with but little response in the Press of Bucharest, and provoked little comment in official circles beyond an expression of satisfaction that a Roumanian Representative had contrived to make himself such a good position. It was even hinted that the inner motive of the demonstrations was home politics.

I have, &c.

WALTER TOWNLEY.

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced. It repeated to Sir W. Townley the contents of Sir F. Cartwright's telegram No. 129 of December 1, 1911, D. 7.10 P.M., R. 9 P.M. (F.O. 48132/47832/11/7.) The conversation referred to above contained reference to the anxiety of the King of the Bulgarians lest a dangerous situation should arise in the Balkans if the war continued until the spring.]

No. 530.

Mr. Lampson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 51522/51522/11/44.

(No. 129.)

Sir,

Sofia, D. December 12, 1911.

R. December 27, 1911.

His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople having in recent despatches⁽¹⁾ commented upon the idea raised at that capital for a confederation of all the Balkan States, it may not be amiss to give a brief estimate of the reception accorded to the suggestion in Bulgaria.

Almost all Bulgarians of weight with whom I have discussed the question, from the Prime Minister downwards, seem agreed that the proposal is in principle an excellent one, and worthy of every encouragement. It is recognised that a loyal confederation of the Balkan States would place the Balkan Peninsula in a position independent of the good-will of any single Great Power, and would greatly improve the economic and political situation of the Balkan peoples generally. Unfortunately,

⁽¹⁾ [In his despatch No. 772, D. October 31, 1911, R. November 6, 1911 (F.O. 43732/48732/11/44), and again in his despatch No. 794, D. November 8, 1911, R. November 13, 1911 (F.O. 44812/30691/11/44), Sir G. Lowther had mentioned that the Constantinople press was hostile to an alliance with Russia and favoured the idea of a Balkan federation as "the more natural combination and would if realized involve something more than a good understanding with Russia."]

however, in practice, certain hard facts must be faced, and Bulgarian Statesmen of the Opposition, together with the Press in general, have expressed themselves on the whole with more force than diplomacy in alluding to certain phases of the question.

Throughout the whole volume of public opinion one predominant note has been sounded:—distrust of Turkey and Turkish sincerity. It has been felt that the main reason for this sudden desire on the part of the Turks to live in peace and good-will with their Balkan neighbours lies in the difficult position in which Turkey at present finds herself placed; given that the storm is safely weathered, it is firmly believed that a complete “volte-face” would probably follow.

The matter has been thrashed out from many points of view and it seems quite clear that Bulgaria is not inclined to take up the idea with any seriousness until Turkey gives more tangible proof of her good faith. So long as Bulgaria is threatened with a festering sore on her immediate frontier, it is considered here a waste of time to indulge in rhetorical rhapsodies over the blessings of a United Balkan Federation. It is pointed out that, apart from the greatest and most difficult of all questions—the present state of affairs in Macedonia—there are many other matters in which Turkey might show her goodwill. It is urged that in none of these pending questions has the Turkish Government taken the hand of friendship proffered by Monsieur Ghéshoff, and signs of restiveness are not wanting at the lack of success of the friendly policy of the present Government towards the hereditary enemy and the oppressor of some five centuries.

It is therefore not surprising that, after occupying the principal columns of every newspaper for days on end, the matter has been allowed to drop as unpracticable and not worth the ink expended upon expounding its advantages and disadvantages.

Moreover, recent events in Itchib have, for the moment, completely eclipsed all other topics of discussion, and whatever their ultimate result may be, it can be asserted with some confidence that public opinion in Bulgaria will for some time to come be less inclined than ever to put trust in any Turkish advances.

It would be a mistake to attach an exaggerated importance to the effect which the latter regrettable incident may have had upon Monsieur Guéshoff's position; but at the same time it should not be forgotten that there are many influential members of the Opposition who are only too ready to take advantage of any discontent which may manifest itself in regard to his Turcophil policy.

A copy of this despatch will be sent to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople.

I have, &c.

MILES W. LAMPSON.

MINUTE.

A Balkan Federation is as yet very far distant. They distrust not only Turkey but each other.

R. P. M.
L. M.

No. 531.

Sir W. Townley to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 51669/51669/11/87.

(No. 70.) Confidential.

Sir,

Bucharest, D. December 18, 1911.

R. December 27, 1911.

I found the Minister for Foreign Affairs rather disturbed this morning in consequence of questions which would appear to have been addressed either to him or to Roumanian representatives abroad respecting the extraordinary military preparations that this country is said to be making. Monsieur Maioresco stated that

he could not understand how such a belief had become current, and attributed it to the recent meeting of French and Russian diplomatists at Paris, though he was unable to surmise why such a hare should have been started in such circles. His Excellency denied categorically that there was any foundation whatever for such a supposition, although he confessed that there had been some extra activity at the Roumanian War Office since the present Government took office. He said that the late War Minister was a bit slack, and that Monsieur Filipesco has been somewhat of a new broom, partly because it was required of him in consequence of the condition in which he found the Department, and partly because, as a civilian, he is somewhat anxious to impress the military party with his zeal, and to win the confidence of the officers.

Monsieur Maioresco assured me that nothing more had been or was being undertaken than is absolutely necessary for putting the army in proper trim. The results of Monsieur Filipesco's energy had, he said, made themselves apparent at the Autumn Manœuvres. As I reported in my despatch No. 66, Confidential, of the 6th instant,⁽¹⁾ there is certainly a belief that unusual military preparations are being made, and I know that the Roumanian Government are negotiating an order for 100,000,000 ball cartridges. I have asked for the *cahier des charges* of this order, and have been promised the same as soon as it can be copied.

I took the occasion to ask Monsieur Maioresco if he knew what had been the object of the King of Bulgaria's recent visit to Vienna. His Excellency laughed and said that he did not, and that he did not believe His Majesty's own Ministers knew.

I then said, as it seemed to me that it might be interesting to know the Minister's views, that a rumour had reached me that King Ferdinand had approached Count Aehrenthal with a view to ascertaining how Austria would look upon an understanding between this country and Bulgaria, and whether such an arrangement would be likely to receive Austrian support. Monsieur Maioresco replied that it was quite possible that King Ferdinand might have acted in this manner, but that there had been absolutely no exchange of views between the two Governments nor indeed, had the subject been broached to him officially. His Excellency added that Mr. Bouchier, of the "Times," who is a strong advocate of a Bulgo-Roumanian understanding, had spoken to him on the subject, and had assured him that the Bulgarians would be ready to make such territorial concessions in the Silistria district as would secure to Roumania an easily defensible frontier on that side as the basis of an understanding. Pressed for his authorities, Mr. Bouchier could only assert that he knew that many Bulgarian statesmen held these views. Hardly sufficient authority, the Minister said, on which to open negotiations of such a serious nature.

Reverting to King Ferdinand's visit to Vienna, Monsieur Maioresco said that it was quite possible that that astute politician had purposely let it be surmised there that the idea of a Bulgo-Roumanian understanding was on foot. His Majesty might very likely wish that a rumour to that effect should reach Constantinople, and so strengthen his hands in his dealings with the Turkish Government.

Roumania, Monsieur Maioresco added, in conclusion, will make no arrangement with Bulgaria or with Turkey. Her position forces her to keep her hands quite unfettered. The King and his Government fear greatly what may happen in the spring, and Roumania must be prepared for all eventualities. It is earnestly hoped here that the great Powers of Europe may before the end of the winter agree upon some means of bringing the war between Turkey and Italy to an end. Unless all are agreed, His Excellency said, the Turks are sure to have recourse to their classical policy of playing off one group of Powers against the other.

I have, &c.

WALTER TOWNLEY.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 519-20, No. 529.]

Lord Granville to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 51557/30691/11/44.

(No. 445.)

Sir,

Berlin, D. December 21, 1911.

R. December 27, 1911.

The "Tageblatt" reproduced last night a report printed in the "Times," to the effect that a train-load of war material from Germany had reached the Turkish frontier at Zibeftehe, and had there been taken over by Turkish officials. An editorial comment on this report stated that the attempt to arouse feeling in Italy against Germany by means of this report was too obvious to achieve its purpose. If there was any truth at all in the report, it could only at the most be a question of medical supplies imported from Germany by Turkey or placed at her disposal by the Red Cross Society.

The "Kreuz-Zeitung" this morning expresses great indignation at the publication of the report, which it describes as pure gossip. Sufficient proof of the strict neutrality of Germany was, it says, furnished by the fact that her correct attitude had called forth violent abuse both from Italy and Turkey.

The "Kölnische Zeitung" says it may be that consignments of war material produced in private factories have been forwarded through Serbia. This would, however, in no way infringe the provisions of § 7 of the Hague Convention, which specifically permits the supply of war material by neutral States to belligerents. But it adds, that it is quite untrue that the Turkish Ambassador had, as alleged by the "Times," thanked the Emperor for this proof of Germany's friendship.

I have, &c.

GRANVILLE.

MINUTE.

Mr. Lampson reported that the story is true⁽¹⁾ but it is not a violation of neutrality, so that the German newspapers have excited themselves unnecessarily.

L. M.

⁽¹⁾ [Mr Lampson reported in his telegram No. 42 of December 20, D 9 P M, R. December 21, 8 A.M., that a train containing munitions of war was believed to have crossed the frontier on December 11. (F.O. 51128/30691/11/44.)]

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 51675/51675/11/39.

(No. 81.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. December 21, 1911.

R. December 27, 1911.

The general debate on the Budget and the special debate on the estimates of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs furnished two occasions last week for Monsieur Milovanovitch to make a declaration of the present foreign policy of Serbia.

On the first occasion on the 11th instant, His Excellency stated that Serbia was not bound to Russia and the Triple *Entente* as had been said in some quarters, still less could Serbia bind herself to Austria and the Triple Alliance. Both these groupings of the Great Powers had much more weighty problems to elucidate just now than the Balkan problem. Serbia must not imagine that she was the centre point of Europe's interest. That interest had its limits. Serbia's duty was, by

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations]

showing herself capable of defending her independence, to prove herself a reliable factor in the balance of power in Eastern Europe. That was the basis of her foreign policy. The most important object now for the Balkan peoples was to draw nearer to one another and to aim at complete solidarity. If this were attained and the future destinies of the Balkan States rested in their own hands then would Serbia be able, however difficult and critical the situation might be at present for the Balkan peoples, [to] look at the future with full confidence. He was hopeful that the formula the Balkans to the Balkan peoples would some day be universally recognised.

On the 15th instant Monsieur Milovanovitch, in reply to an attack made upon him by the leader of the Progressists, who blamed the Servian Government for their passive attitude in the face of events in the Turkish Empire as compared with the activity and energy displayed by Bulgaria and Greece, made the statement that the general situation was so serious that no one could tell what would happen in the Spring. On that account, His Excellency went on, Serbia as well as Bulgaria and Greece must be prudent. As a matter of fact Bulgaria and Greece had shown great reserve as regards recent events in Macedonia and Crete respectively. An appeal to Europe at the present moment could but entail certain dangers. It seemed most desirable for the Balkan States that the Powers should not mix themselves up in Balkan affairs.

From the above, it will be seen that the Servian Government realise fully that the future of Serbia is linked to that of the other Balkan States, and consequently that she must draw closer to them and not pursue an independent policy leaning either on Russia or on Austria.

As to Monsieur Milovanovitch's gloomy view of the general situation, I took an opportunity to ask the Secretary General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs whether His Excellency had any special reasons for making such a statement. Monsieur Yovanovitch replied that recent events in Macedonia, the reinforcements and redistribution of Turkish troops in the Sandjak, the continuous inflow of arms through Montenegro to arm the Albanians, and the perturbed state of the political atmosphere in general justified Monsieur Milovanovitch's opinion that anything might happen in the Spring.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

MINUTE.

Penultimate para Yes, but no one seems particularly anxious to draw nearer to Serbia. In fact in the Balkan peninsula no one seems anxious to draw nearer to anyone—at least in a friendly manner.

R. G. V.
Jan[uary] 6, [1912].
R. P. M.
H. N.
L. M.

No. 584.

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 580/580/12/7.

(No. 138.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sofia, D. December 23, 1911.

R. January 4, 1912.

With reference to my despatch No. 88, Very Confidential of August 31st⁽²⁾ last, I have the honour to enclose herewith a despatch which has been addressed to

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the War Office]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 502-3, No. 518.]

me by Lieut[enant]-Col[onel] Lyon, R.A., Military Attaché to His Majesty's Legation, respecting the question of the conclusion of a secret military convention between the Bulgarian and Russian Governments.

Colonel Lyon, who has discussed the matter with Major Tabouis, the French Military Attaché, has come to the conclusion that the evidence respecting the negotiations on this subject is not very substantial.

I gather however from a confidential source that during both the late spring and early summer General Fitcheff, the Chief of the General Staff, and Colonel Romanowsky, the Russian Military Agent, worked together to promote a scheme regarding military assistance to be given by Russia in the event of war between Bulgaria and Turkey. Were hostilities to break out, the Bulgarian coast would be at the mercy of the Turkish Navy, and the region round Bourgas would be one of the most vulnerable points open to Turkish attack. Hence the anxiety shown by the Bulgarian Headquarter Staff for some protection in the case of an advance of the Bulgarian Army southwards.

On his return from St. Petersburg, on the conclusion of the Russian Manœuvres, General Fitcheff appears to have changed his views respecting the necessity of coming to an arrangement with Russia. Some say that he was not impressed with existing Russian military conditions; others that he has been won over by Austria, and certain events that have occurred this autumn, such as the arrival in Sofia of Austrian Staff Officers, who were entertained by the Bulgarian General Staff, give some colour to such a supposition.

The real cause in my opinion is, however, the attitude of His Majesty King Ferdinand, as His Majesty prefers to continue his "jeu de bascule" under present conditions, and is unwilling to decidedly throw in his lot with either Russia or Austria.

I am further strengthened in this conclusion by the fact that His Majesty has endeavoured to sound certain members of the Diplomatic Corps as to Colonel Romanofsky's character and capacity, and has even gone so far as to pronounce him as somewhat too energetic and "remuant." Colonel Romanofsky is certainly anxious to sign some military agreement with Bulgaria which would render Russian action easier in the case of an outbreak of a war between Russia and Turkey, but hitherto his endeavours have not been successful.

I have, &c.

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

Enclosure in No. 584.

Lieutenant-Colonel Lyon to Sir H. Bax-Ironside.⁽³⁾

Sir,

Sofia, December , 1911.⁽⁴⁾

I have only this week had an opportunity of talking with Major Tabouis, the French military attaché here, on the subject of the negotiations that you reported to the Foreign Office as having recently taken place between the Bulgarian and Russian Governments, regarding military assistance to be given by Russia in the event of war between Bulgaria and Turkey.

2. The evidence of these negotiations is not very substantial. M. Paleologue, the French Minister, heard by chance that the Bulgarian Government was discussing direct with the Russian War Office, through the Russian military agent here, the question of how such assistance might best be given. M. Paleologue drew the attention of Major Tabouis to what he had heard, and the latter considered that various circumstances pointed to the fact that the Bulgarian military authorities were paying unusual attention to the rather desolate country round Bourgas. One of the ablest of the younger officers of the general staff recently spent some weeks

⁽³⁾ [The text given above is printed from the copy in the *Confidential Print*, as the original was sent to the War Office.]

⁽⁴⁾ [Thus in original.]

in that country, and subsequently a staff ride was held by the chief of the general staff in the same locality. In addition to this, General Fitcheff, who had arranged to attend the French manoeuvres, changed his mind four days before he should have left for Paris, and went to the Russian manoeuvres instead.

3. I am of the opinion that the above facts do not point to an intention to conclude a military convention between the two countries, but indicate rather that the Bulgarian Government recognises that in certain eventualities it might be desirable to seek the aid of a Russian force, and that in such a case, it might be convenient for this force to land at Bourgas.

4. An agreement with Russia that she should send an army to assist Bulgaria in the event of the latter being at war with Turkey would be extremely unpopular here. The most that is desired is that, by threatening the frontier of Moldavia, Russia will keep Roumania in check.

I am, &c.
F. LYON.

No. 535.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R Paget ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 285/19/12/44.

(No. 1.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 3, 1912.

The Servian Chargé d'Affaires called on the 29th ultimo, and spoke at length about Austrian intrigues in Albania, &c.

He stated that the troops on the frontier of the Sandjak of Novi-Bazar had been drilled in the last three months; that the Servian G[overnmen]t knew that Austrian agents were persuading Albanians to petition the Austrian G[overnmen]t to protect them; that the King of Montenegro had told the Russian Minister at Cetinje that he knew that Austria had decided to annex the Sandjak of Novi-Bazar in January, and had obtained the consent of Italy, Germany, and Turkey to this course.⁽²⁾

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch was repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 4). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [As drafted originally, this despatch formed part of a minute addressed to Sir Edward Grey by Mr. Mallet. After the two paragraphs given above the minute continued as follows:—

This seems improbable but evidence is accumulating that Austria is doing something. Mr. Lampson at Sofia is quite convinced on the subject.

We might ask our consul at Serajevo whether it is true that the Austrian forces in Bosnia have been largely augmented lately [*v. infra, Ed. note*] and copies of the despatch recording this interview should be sent to St. Petersburg and Constantinople, Rome and Berlin, and Sir G. Buchanan instructed to enquire whether the story of the King of Montenegro's conversation is accurate. [*v. immediately succeeding document.*]

Your telegram of to-day will open this subject. The only way of avoiding a repetition of the Bosnian crisis is an understanding between Austria and Russia.

L. M.
Dec. 29.
E. G.]

[*ED. NOTE.*—Sir Edward Grey's telegram to Consul Freeman of January 3 asked if there was "any information to the effect that Austrian troops in Bosnia have been largely increased lately." (F.O. 285/19/12/44.) A copy was sent to Vienna, and Mr. Russell telegraphed in reply on the 4th that Consul Freeman was on leave, but that on the point raised the military attaché at Vienna had no reason to alter the opinion previously expressed. This was to the effect that he had no information to suggest an increase of troops in Bosnia, and an official denial from the Minister of War. (Enclosure in despatch from Mr. T. Russell, No. 218 of December 20, 1911. F.O. 51616/48615/11/3.)]

No. 536.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 285/19/12/44.

(No. 4.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 8, 1912.

I transmit to you a copy of a despatch to H[is] M[ajesty's] Minister at Belgrade,⁽²⁾ recording a statement made by the Servian Chargé d'Affaires respecting the alleged intention of Austria-Hungary to annex the Sandjak of Novi-Bazar at an early date.

I request Y[our] E[xcellency] to enquire from the Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] if the King of Montenegro actually did use to the Russian Minister at Cetinje the language stated.

[I am, &c.]

E. GREY.]

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch was repeated to Rome (No. 6); to Vienna (No. 2); to Berlin (No. 7); to Constantinople (No. 6). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document]

No. 537.

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.*Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Bertie,

Foreign Office, January 9, 1912.

I understand the sensitiveness of de Selves about an understanding between Italy, Russia and Austria respecting the Balkans, referred to in the last paragraph of your despatch number: 8, of the 3rd instant;⁽²⁾ but I am not sure that de Selves is right.

Up to the time of Iswolsky's quarrel with Aehrenthal, there was a working agreement between Russia and Austria about the Balkans. It did not produce a "rapprochement" between Germany and Russia, and it did not impair the relations between France and Russia. I do not see why an agreement should do so in the future.

I can understand a dislike on the part of Germany to an understanding between Russia and Austria; for, if Austria was sure of being able to avoid a quarrel with Russia, she would be more independent of Germany than she now is.

What makes me wish for a working understanding between Russia and Austria is that a war between them would be very inconvenient. I do not think that we could take part in it, and intervene on the Russian side in a Balkan war; and yet our abstention would prove a danger to the maintenance of the present grouping of the European Powers. I do not think that France would like to see a war between Russia and Austria.

On the whole, it seems to me that, unless France and we were prepared to go to war on behalf of Russia, the danger of upsetting the present grouping of the Powers would be far greater if Russia became involved in a war with Austria than if she came to a working agreement with that country.

Of course, I cannot actively promote an agreement between Russia and Austria against the wishes of France; and I do not know that any active attempt by me to promote such an agreement would have the result intended. An agreement is more likely to come about if we do not mix ourselves in the matter. This makes

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 14.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 356-7, No. 355.]

the question rather academic as far as I am concerned; but I think it worth while to tell you why I doubt whether de Selves is right in his view.

Y[ou]rs sincerely,

E. G[REY].

Since I wrote this de Selves has resigned, but I send it as his resignation doesn't affect the merits of the question. I am very sorry he has gone for I had a very favourable impression of his personality and character.

E. G.

No. 538.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Eduard Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 1893/19/12/44.

(No. 10.)

St. Petersburg, D. January 10, 1912.

Sir,

R. January 15, 1912.

In reply to the enquiries which I addressed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day, in accordance with the instructions conveyed to me in your despatch No. 4 (285/12) of the 3rd instant,⁽²⁾ His Excellency informed me that it was quite true that the King of Montenegro had told the Russian Minister at Cetinje that he knew that Austria had decided to annex the Sanjak in January and had obtained the consent of Germany, Italy and Turkey to this course. He did not, however, himself believe that this was the case, as it would mean that Austria was prepared to raise a general conflagration in the Balkans.

Reports had, His Excellency continued, reached him of large reinforcements having been sent to the troops stationed near the frontier and of the ordinary railway traffic having been suspended in order to facilitate the passage of military trains. The Austrian Ambassador, to whom he had spoken on the subject, had given both these reports a categorical denial. Count Thurn had explained that it was true that the ordinary railway traffic had been temporarily dislocated, but that this was due to the fact that the Hungarians had insisted on having special railway facilities granted them for the transport of their grain after the last harvest. As regarded the strengthening of the frontier troops, Count Thurn had stated that all that had been done was to bring the regiments up to their proper strength, and that this measure had not been confined to the frontier districts but had been equally taken in the interior in the cases of regiments which were below that strength.

Monsieur Sazonow said that he was inclined to believe that Count Aehrenthal was not contemplating any aggressive action, but that he wished to be ready to meet all possible eventualities. I said that this view was shared by His Majesty's Ambassador at Vienna, and enquired whether his Excellency had heard anything of what took place at the recent interview which Count Aehrenthal had had with the King of Bulgaria.

His Excellency replied that according to the account which had reached him Count Aehrenthal had assured the King that Austria had no intention of embarking on a policy of adventure, and had impressed on His Majesty the necessity of His abstaining from pursuing such a policy. This advice, Monsieur Sazonow remarked, was quite superfluous as he did not believe that King Ferdinand would ever have the courage to adopt an aggressive policy. He had also heard a report, which had been subsequently contradicted, that Count Aehrenthal had recommended King Ferdinand to cultivate friendly relations with Roumania. This also was rather curious advice for an Austrian Minister to give His Majesty, and His Excellency then asked whether

⁽¹⁾ [This document is marked "Seen at Berlin."]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 527, No. 536.]

I thought that Roumania had contracted any engagement with Austria-Hungary with regard to Bulgaria.

I replied that when I was at Sofia King Ferdinand had himself told me that the King of Roumania had once warned him that, should the Bulgarian army cross the Rhodopes, the Roumanian army would be mobilised at Silistria. Roumania was apparently determined to obtain some territorial compensation on the side of the Dobrudja, should Bulgaria acquire an accession of territory in Macedonia: and in the event of a Turco-Bulgarian war Roumania would, no doubt, threaten the rear of the Bulgarian army unless she was held in check by Russia. Whether she had ever given Austria an engagement to the above effect I could not say; but it was generally believed in Bulgaria that a military convention existed between her and that Empire.

Monsieur Sazonow observed that he also believed in the existence of such a convention; and it would be interesting to know whether it bound Austria to intervene in the event of Russia taking military measures to restrain Roumania from an attack on Bulgaria. I replied that I thought it most probable that Russian intervention would lead to Austrian intervention.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

MINUTE.

We have on occasion been categorically assured by the Roumanians that there is no convention between Austria and Roumania—and personally I do not believe that one exists—though Roumania hitherto has let it be clearly understood what her attitude would be if Bulgaria mobilized. The interesting point to ascertain is whether this attitude is under process of being modified, for considerations—most probably to my mind such is the case.^(*)

A. N.
E. G.

(*) [Rumania signed four treaties with Austria-Hungary. The first was on October 30, 1883, to which Germany acceded on the same date and Italy on May 15, 1888. The texts of all these are in *Pribram*, Vol. I, pp. 78–89, 164–88. The fourth treaty was signed on February 5, 1913, Germany acceding on February 26 and Italy on March 5.]

No. 539.

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 2825/2031/12/44.

(No. 8.) Confidential.

Sofia, D. January 15, 1912.

Sir,

R. January 22, 1912.

I have read with interest Sir F. Cartwright's despatch to you No. 205, Confidential, of the 5th ultimo,⁽¹⁾ in the Print Sections.

This despatch opens up questions which so vitally affect the Balkan States, and His Majesty's Ambassador touches on so many matters involving the future destiny of the Near East, that I venture to make the following observations upon it.

As you are aware, I have myself heard from Monsieur Gueshoff, thus confirming Sir F. Cartwright's information, that the King of Bulgaria was directly invited by the Emperor of Austria, at the instigation of Count Aehrenthal, to visit Vienna. On receiving this invitation, His Majesty telegraphed direct from Ebenthal, where he was then staying, to the President of the Council, asking him whether he saw any objection, in view of the existing circumstances, to the visit. Monsieur Gueshoff replied that he saw no objection, but it is certain that he was much preoccupied and anxious until King Ferdinand informed him of the result, when the effect was tranquillizing.

His Majesty, on his return to this Capital, discussed his interview with Count Aehrenthal at length, both with Monsieur Gueshoff and Monsieur Daneff; he informed these two statesmen that Count Aehrenthal was much preoccupied with the political situation of the Dual Monarchy in view of the immediate difficulties of the Near

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 517–9, No. 528.]

Eastern problem, and that he personally had arrived at the conclusion that Count Aehrenthal was very anxious for a "rapprochement" with Russia. His Majesty added that, while Count Aehrenthal had shown a very friendly disposition towards Bulgaria, he had put forward no definite proposition which could be regarded as likely to satisfy Bulgarian aspirations.

It is clear that, were the policy above alluded to successful, it would be a great blow both to King Ferdinand personally, and the Bulgarian hopes in general; the favourite "jeu de bascule" of His Majesty would of necessity cease, as the limitations of a greater Bulgaria would doubtless be fixed by Russia and Austria.

Count Aehrenthal's programme of a large autonomous Albania, which has become known in the course of the last few months, has tended to make Austria's position a lonely one. A large Albania, comprising the major portion of the three vilayets, would not be agreeable either to Bulgaria, Servia, or Greece; this is apparent by Count Aehrenthal's failure to gain over partisans for his programme both in Sofia and Athens, to which capitals he sent agents last year. As far as one can judge, it seems that Austria-Hungary cannot directly hope for any effective support from Russia or Germany, either for the creation of an autonomous Albania or for assistance in carrying out an active Balkan policy. It was reported by His Majesty's Ambassador in Vienna to you in the course of the late Albanian troubles that the Austro-Hungarian Government were not satisfied with utterances from Germany to the effect that that Empire limited itself solely to an approval of an amelioration of economic and financial conditions in the European portion of the Ottoman Empire. It has also been alleged—and, I believe, with truth—that the German Chancellor gave Monsieur Sazonoff to understand at Potsdam⁽²⁾ that his Government would not approve of an active Austro-Hungarian policy in the Balkans. Count Aehrenthal, doubtless taking all these circumstances into consideration, was anxious to gain over King Ferdinand in favour of Austria, promising him his reward as reported by Sir F. Cartwright, but he was not successful.

The King, whilst constitutionally unwilling to arrive at important decisions, is undoubtedly drawn towards Russia. The Orthodox religion, the affinities of race and language, together with gratitude for aid in attaining their independence, have made the nation very favourably disposed towards that Empire, and His Majesty with his great astuteness, well knows that, whatever his personal predilections may be, he would risk both his own position and that of the dynasty by coming to an arrangement with Austria for the future partition of Macedonia without first obtaining Russia's consent.

As regards the rewards said to have been offered to the King, His Majesty would prefer that the guarantees against Roumania should come from the Russian rather than from the Austrian side; further His Majesty's views, together with those of his Government, are at the present time favourably disposed towards Servia, and the occupation of a Servian province, said to have been proposed as a sop to Bulgarian aspirations elsewhere, would not accord with the views which exist here, at the present time, towards that country.

Future events in the Balkans may, and in my humble opinion are likely to cause the relations between these two states to become more cordial. The greatest obstacle to an arrangement, viz.:—the limitation of the respective spheres of influence of the two countries in Macedonia, has, as you, Sir, are aware, been already largely overcome.

The attitude of Roumania must, it would appear, eventually change when she finds herself face to face with Serbo-Bulgarian solidarity, whereas at the present time the relations between these two states are merely correct. One reason for such a change on the part of Roumania will be the action of Russia, who will use all her influence at Bucharest to force Roumania to adopt a neutral policy, which should be the more easy as the latter country would not then have to fear an aggrandisement

(2) [The meeting at Potsdam will be referred to in a later volume.]

of Bulgaria alone, but she would find in the future aggrandisement of Serbia a guarantee of the equilibrium of the Balkan States.

As far as can be gathered here, the Ambassador's remarks respecting the relations between Russia and Austria-Hungary are entirely accurate. It does not appear that an entente could be arrived at except under conditions which Austria would be unlikely to agree to. She would have to cease from her constant anti-Russian agitation in Galicia, (proofs of which can daily be gathered from the columns of the entire Slav Press). She would have to cease from intriguing in Balkan affairs, both in Albania, Serbia, Macedonia, and, to a smaller extent, in this country.

It is evident that at the present time Germany is exercising considerable influence in the direction of an Austro-Russian understanding. Her efforts in this direction can be perceived both in Petersburg and Belgrade, but hitherto she has met with no success. This policy is most probably not due to fondness either for Russia or Austria, but because if successful it would be of great help in maintaining the present "status quo" in the Ottoman Empire. The rapid weakening of the Young Turk Party must be viewed with deep concern by all who are interested in the Near Eastern question. How much more therefore by Count Aehrenthal, whose political position would be seriously imperilled by any change?

Whilst agreeing thus in the main with the views expressed by Sir F. Cartwright, I would respectfully submit a doubt as to the views he has expressed as to the policy of Russia.

In the latter portion of the penultimate paragraph of his despatch, the Ambassador states that "Russia not being prepared to go to war with Austria, and having her attention called to events in Persia and China, it is not likely that any of the Great Powers will do more than champion the cause of Serbia platonically, if the division of the provinces of Turkey in Europe should become necessary in the near future."

Russia's differences with Persia can be settled with the consent of Great Britain only, and if force has unfortunately to be used by her in Northern Persia, the employment of a very few thousand men is all that will be found necessary. Russia's troubles in China, although more extensive, are, if she is only successful in adopting a conciliatory policy towards Japan, of a comparatively slight nature. In the case of the dismemberment of the Chinese Empire, she can, and doubtless would, console herself either by the annexation of Upper Mongolia, or by the employment of that province as a buffer state, and should she confine herself to such a policy, no other Power is likely to say her nay.

But I would most respectfully submit that Russia's Interests in the Balkans are to her of a more serious and urgent nature than her interests in more distant portions of the world. Should she fall from her present position as the protector and defender of the Slav race, and allow Austria to usurp the functions which she herself is now exercising, she would have to submit to a total absorption of Serbia in the Austrian Empire, to an occupation of the Sandjak of Novi-Bazar, to the incorporation of an autonomous Albania, and to the eventual descent of Austria to Salonica, with all the resulting consequences. The Dual Monarchy would evolve into a Triple Monarchy, in which the Serb element would play a conspicuous part, and Austria's position would be supreme in the Near East, to the entire detriment of the Muscovite Empire.

In support of my contention that Russia will not stand by with folded hands were a catastrophe to arise, I have become aware that the Russian Minister in this Capital has quite recently entered into a correspondence with his Government as to the necessity of preparing immediate plans in view of future trouble.

When the Russian policy is evolved, it will presumably be made known to the other members of the Triple Entente from headquarters.

No doubt Monsieur de Hartwig's hostile attitude at Belgrade causes annoyance at the Ballplatz, but it appears to me a sign that Russia will not leave Serbia in the lurch, but will be prepared, when the necessity arises, to give her material aid to maintain her threatened independence.

I have heard from a certain source that Servia has received the assurances of the Emperor of Russia that she need be under no anxiety as to her future, as Russia would protect her both materially and effectively against Austrian aggression. Such promises were given to Servia first in March 1910,⁽³⁾ during the visit of the King of Servia to Petersburg, and secondly last year on the occasion of the marriage of Princess Helena. It seems highly probable that similar assurances were given to Servia by France, namely that she would use her influence in support of Russia's policy, if it became necessary, on the late visit of the Servian Monarch to Paris.

The recent annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, placing as it does so many members of the Slav race under the dominion of the Dual Monarchy, was a blow to Russia's pride and prestige, and it is one amongst other and stronger reasons for rendering an Entente between these Powers extremely difficult. It is scarcely probable that Russia would view a further advance without taking up arms in response to the appeal of her coreligionists.

A copy of this despatch will be sent to His Majesty's Ambassadors at Vienna and Constantinople.

I have, &c.

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

MINUTE.

Sir H. Bax-Ironside touches on a very large number of questions, and he disagrees with some of the more important conclusions of Sir F. Cartwright in a very interesting despatch which H[is] E[xc]ellency wrote last December (No. 49441 annexed) ⁽⁴⁾

The illness of Count Aehrenthal has altered the situation, introducing a further element of uncertainty, since these despatches were written.

It seems to me that where Sir H. Bax-Ironside differs from Sir F. Cartwright for the most part the opinions expressed by the latter are more likely to prove correct. Very much of what Sir H. Bax-Ironside writes is the purest speculation. Thus, what have we to show that the political position of Count Aehrenthal would be seriously imperilled by any change such as the weakening of the Young Turk party? Had Count Aehrenthal lived and continued in good health,⁽⁵⁾ probably few statesmen would have been more capable to deal adroitly and to the advantage of Austria with an altered situation in Turkey.

Then again Sir H. Bax-Ironside assumes that Russian attention cannot be to any great extent diverted from the Balkans to Northern Persia, because, "if she has to use force there, the employment of a very few thousand men is all that will be found necessary." This is a bold assumption: if Russia occupies N[orth] Persia more than temporarily she will not improbably come into conflict with Turkey, who will consider her eastern provinces menaced. It is not unlikely that Turkey has moved forward on the frontier to improve her strategic position in the event of Russia coming further south.

The third paragraph from the end is interesting but it seems hardly probable that the Emperor of Russia can have given such assurances, which, from a military point of view, would be hard to fulfil. How could Russia defend Servia, so close to Austria and so far from Russia, against Austrian aggression?

Our information is that Austria has been drawing closer of late to Montenegro and Bulgaria, but there has been little improvement in Austro-Servian relations.

A. P.

Jan[uar]y 29, 1912.

A. N.

R. P. M.

E. G.

⁽³⁾ [For the visit of King Peter to St. Petersburg in March 1910, *v. supra*, pp. 141-62, Nos. 133-49, *passim*. A semi-official *communiqué* made to the Russian press at the end of the visit promised the active moral support of Russia to Servia in maintaining peace with Turkey, Bulgaria and other neighbouring States. (*cp.* Sir B. Whitehead's despatch No. 24, D. March 29, 1910, R. April 4, 1910. F.O. 371/982. 11363/9204/11/39.) *cp.* also *infra*, p. 543, No. 550, and p. 553, No. 556.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 517-9, No. 528.]

⁽⁵⁾ [The phraseology here is curious. Count von Aehrenthal died on February 17, 1912 (*n. infra*, p. 543, No. 551). A possible explanation is that the minute is wrongly dated. It is typed on the jacket of the paper, even the signature and date being in typescript. The initials of Sir A. Nicolson, Mr. Maxwell, and Sir Edward Grey are, however, written below in their own hands.]

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 2914/19/12/44.
(No. 2.) Confidential.
Sir,

Belgrade, D. January 16, 1912.

R. January 22, 1912.

I took an opportunity to-day of questioning the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the subject of the alleged Austrian intrigues in Albania, and on the general political outlook in these parts.

M. Milovanovitch declared that there was no doubt whatever but that a regular campaign was being pursued by Austria-Hungary in Albania, where they were employing agents to endeavour to persuade the people to petition Austria-Hungary for protection against the Turks. The policy of the Dual Monarchy, His Excellency went on, in encouraging an Albanian movement was simply to create another element of discord in the Balkans, so as to give herself yet another excuse for intervention in the peninsula. There had never been an Albanian Nation, like a Servian, a Bulgarian or a Greek Nation. The Albanians, divided up as they were by their different religious creeds and without any past history or traditions, except brigandage, did not possess the elements essential for the life of a nation. Were by chance autonomy granted to them, discord would at once reign and the result would be an appeal to Austria, their maker. Any encouragement, therefore, given from outside to Albanianism was merely playing into the hands of Austria. Large quantities of arms and ammunition had of late been smuggled into Albania through Montenegro and the population was far better armed now than before their disarmament.

In reply to my enquiry as to whether he thought that Austria meant business in the spring, His Excellency replied that of course it was impossible to foretell; it would depend on a variety of circumstances, chiefly on the condition of Turkey's internal policy, and her attitude in Macedonia and in Albania. One of the circumstances which might tempt Austria was the fact that Russia was occupied elsewhere, in Persia and China. The visit of King Ferdinand to Vienna, whatever may have been its outcome, was also an ominous sign which could not be ignored. One thing was certain and that was that the Servian Government knew for a fact that the Austrian divisions in Bosnia and Herzegovina had been brought up to their full complement and that all arrangements preparatory to mobilisation had been made so that, when the order should be given, the troops could be ready for campaign within a week. As an instance of the preparations made, M. Milovanovitch told me that he had had in his own hands one of the originals of a circular addressed to all the medical men in Agram, ordering them to report themselves to the Military Authorities and stating the terms upon which their services would be required in the event of war, the amount of their pay, (20 Kronen a day), the amount of pension for their family in case of death, &c.

I then asked M. Milovanovitch what Serbia's attitude would be in case Austria reoccupied the Sandjak. He replied that Serbia could not possibly look on with her arms folded, she would also have to move forward into the Sandjak; there were points where the Austrian troops would arrive first, but there were others also where the Servian troops could be first. It was a matter of life and death to them; if the Austrians once got down into the valley of Kossovo, Serbia might just as well throw up the sponge and go over bag and baggage into the Austrian camp. It would be useless to go on struggling after that and Serbia might as well be incorporated into the Dual Monarchy where, added to the Slav element already existing, they would form a block of some 8 or 9 millions.

In reply to my question as to whether they had not come to some arrangement with Bulgaria and Montenegro to face eventualities, he shrugged his shoulders, and said that Bulgaria seemed to be in Austria's pocket as well as Montenegro, and

(1) [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

besides it was impossible to attempt dealings with that "*royal pignouf*," King Nicholas.

His Excellency went on to say that as the Triple Entente had been able to keep Germany out of Morocco by their firm attitude, so they ought to do the same to keep Austria out of the Sandjak; they could moreover count upon Italy's support. It was perfectly clear that once more established in the Sandjak Austria would never again retreat, and indeed never rest until she got to Salonika. That would mean the ultimate occupation of Constantinople by Russia and the consequent absorption of all the Balkan States, including Roumania, by Austria and Russia. How would you like that in England? he asked. To my remarking that that seemed a distant eventuality M. Milovanovitch said that no one could ever tell how fast events might go; the horizon was black, far blacker than he had ever known it.

Although it must not be forgotten that the Servian Government are prone to find the hand of Austria at every turn, yet under the present circumstances—Mr. Bouchier, the "*Times*" correspondent, has confirmed to me on independent and reliable authority the existence of an active Austrian propaganda in Albania—it would seem that there are more grounds than usual for Servian alarm.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

MINUTE.

See especially last paragraph.

The whole situation in the Near East is more than usually disquieting, and there are so many uncertain factors, such as Count Aehrenthal's health, and who may take his place if he quits office.

M. Milovanovitch, we heard a few days ago, is also likely to be defeated very shortly. His influence on the whole has been steadying and pacific. His successor is likely to be M. Pasitch, who is much disliked by the King of Montenegro. According to an extremely interesting annual report from Count de Salis there has been a distinct rapprochement between Sofia and Cettingé of late, and the influence of Austria has been consolidated in both capitals of late (according to Sir F. Cartwright).

Such indications as there are seem to point to Austria squaring Bulgaria and Montenegro in the event of making a forward move, and to Servia being isolated. Sir F. Cartwright considers that Russia will not go beyond platonic support to Servia.

A. P.

Jan[uary] 26, 1912.

R. P. M.

A. N.

E. G.

No. 541.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, January 17, 1912.

F.O. 2467/2467/12/3.

Tel. (No. 7.)

D. 8.30 P.M.

R. 9.15 P.M.

Count von Aehrenthal's position is daily becoming more difficult owing to enmity of military party headed by the heir apparent. It is not considered here that he will be able to retain office much longer.

Mr T. Russell to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 2830/2467/12/3.

(No. 8.) Very Confidential.

Vienna, D. January 18, 1912.

Sir,

R. January 22, 1912.

With reference to my telegram No. 7 of yesterday's date⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to report that Count Aehrenthal's numerous enemies are closing in around him and that his resignation of office now only depends on the already much-enfeebled determination of the Emperor to retain his services. It is being reported that His Imperial Majesty will be unable much longer to resist the importunities of the Heir Apparent who declared at the time of the dismissal of General Conrad von Hotzen-dorf that he would give his aged uncle no rest as long as Count Aehrenthal controlled the foreign policy of the Dual Monarchy. The Emperor who, up to a short time ago, resented any sort of suggestions on the part of his nephew, has now—I learn privately—reluctantly admitted that as his own end could not be far distant, it was perhaps right that the future occupant of the Throne should be permitted to assume a larger share in the administration of the State. My informant told me that at the time of the dismissal of General Schonaich, the Minister of War, last summer the venerable Monarch, in reply to a protest from one of his advisers, remarked somewhat plaintively that it was easier to get rid of a War Minister than it was of an Heir Apparent. The crimes of Count Aehrenthal in the eyes of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand are twofold: firstly, a lack of cordiality towards Germany, and, secondly, an excess of cordiality towards Italy. With regard to the first I hear very confidentially that the Emperor William wrote to His Imperial Highness in December to say that though Germany had not always had reason to be thoroughly satisfied with the attitude of Count Aehrenthal, he felt bound to admit that His Excellency was at the present moment the only possible Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs. On my remarking that the Archduke's well-known admiration for the German Emperor would have led one to suppose that this letter would have acted in a favourable manner for Count Aehrenthal, I was assured that his character was not one to brook the slightest interference even on the part of his exalted and much admired friend—nay more, that this interference had only tended to intensify his desire to see a prompt change at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

With regard to Count Aehrenthal's second delinquency, namely a correct attitude towards Italy in conformity with the letter and spirit of the alliance existing between the two countries, there is now but little doubt that this attitude has thwarted an ardent desire on the part of the military party, led by the Archduke to push matters to a head with Italy while a large portion of her army was shut up in Tripoli.

Though you, Sir, are aware and it has often been reported from this Embassy—that very unfriendly feelings exist between Austrians and Italians, it is only since the Italian seizure of Tripoli that a belief has been generally and openly expressed that actual hostilities are inevitable sooner or later, and that Albania will provide a fitting scene for the struggle.

Why the Archduke should be identifying himself to such a degree in this anti-Italian movement which is now in progress, it is difficult to say if the almost incredible suggestion is dismissed that he is aiming at the re-establishment of the temporal Power of the Pope. The other theory which is being put forward, seems easier of acceptance, namely that the Archduke sees a possibility in the event of a successful campaign in which he would lead the Austro-Hungarian troops to victory, of acquiring a prestige and importance which in other circumstances would certainly be denied him.

Count Aehrenthal, whose policy it has been to improve relations with the junior member in the hope of thus diminishing Austria-Hungary's dependence on the

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

predominant member of the Triple Alliance, can naturally not co-operate with War Ministers and other leading military men who share the views of the Heir Apparent. He may moreover be reluctant to see the worries of the aged Emperor increased on his account. For these reasons, he will probably in the near future place his resignation in the hands of his Imperial Master, pleading the state of his health as an excuse for laying down the burdens of office. Should this prove to be the case, the history of the future will, I think, decide that the Heir-Apparent has rendered his country a great disservice in ridding her of a Minister who, with all the mistakes he has committed, was the one strong man capable of raising the House of Hapsburg from a state of thralldom to a position of comparative independence.

I have, &c.

THEO RUSSELL.

MINUTES.

Extremely interesting We may assume from this that Count Achrenthal's early resignation is not merely a probability, but a certainty, and that his successor will be strongly anti-Italian and pro-German. From the British point of view this is deplorable; but in any case, on the Emperor's death, which cannot be long deferred, the violent anti-Italian, anti-British and pro-German sentiments of the Archduke would have found expression.

It would be interesting to see what Italy, and especially the old Papal States, would say if the restoration of the temporal power of the Papacy ever became a practical question. I imagine it would require the whole Austrian army and more to suppress the revolution and anarchy which would ensue if a serious effort to that end were made.

G. H. V.

22.1.12.

In view of the objection of the Archduke to any interference with his plans, it is not by any means certain that Austria on his succession will become quite submissive to German policy. In fact the Archduke's character and the methods of German diplomacy are not unlikely to clash, and to lead to friction. I do not believe in the story for the restoration of Temporal Power.

E. D.

22/1/12.

E. A. C.

Jan[uary] 22

A. N.

E. G.

No. 543.

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private and Most Confidential.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Sofia, January 18, 1912.

In a letter which I addressed to you on October 23 last,⁽²⁾ I informed you of the secret negotiations which had been commenced between the Bulgarian and Servian Prime Ministers on the 11th of that month. I now am able to state that very severe pressure is being brought to bear on King Ferdinand to give his consent to a secret alliance with Servia.

Both Messrs. Gueshoff and Daneff are strongly urging the King in this direction: the Russian Minister and presumably therefore the Russian Government,—although of this I have as yet no positive proof,—are privy to their policy. The King has been given to understand that in view of the present disquieting state of affairs Bulgaria must decide once for all either to cast in her lot with Russia, or with Austria. M. Daneff is the spokesman in the negotiations which are now proceeding. He has

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. 1 of 1912.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 513-4, No. 525.]

told his Majesty that in any case Russia will not throw over Servia in the event of a forward move on the part of Austria, and should Bulgaria show unwillingness to cooperate with Servia, she must expect the opposition of Russia.

King Ferdinand now finds himself "au pied du mur," and is not in a very happy state of mind. I write you this in order to make the views expressed in my despatch No. 8 Conf[identia]l of the 15th inst[ant] clearer.⁽³⁾

Nekludow considers that the King will have to make up his mind within the next three weeks. The whole matter is being kept very secret, and is not even known at the French Legation.

Yours sincerely,

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

(³) [*v. supra*, pp. 529-32, No. 530.]

No. 544.

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Sofia, January 31, 1912.

You have my thanks for your letter of the 28rd instant.⁽²⁾

Both Gueshoff and Daneff consider that King Ferdinand was indiscreet, (and perhaps knowingly so,) during his visit to Austria in November last. At any rate, they are of opinion that Count Aehrenthal, although he knows, they imagine, nothing definite, has some vague inkling of a Servo-Bulgarian "rapprochement." If this has got out at Vienna, it is through Prince Philip of Coburg, who is in His Majesty's confidence. Hence their action, mentioned in my last letter, of bringing pressure to bear on the King to give his consent to a secret alliance with Servia. This will mean that he must definitely throw in his lot with Russia, and explains his recent visit to Austria, where he conferred at length with Prince Philip. In view of the state of Count Aehrenthal's health, and the insecurity of his position, the King decided not to see him, but to continue to wait on events.

Meanwhile breathing space is afforded by the "high jinks" in connection with Prince Boris' coming of age. Russia, Austria, Germany, Roumania, Greece, Montenegro, and Servia are sending Royal Missions; France, Italy, Belgium, and Turkey Special Missions, and we shall have three fatiguing ceremonial "pleasure" days, commencing on Thursday.

This gives King Ferdinand time to come to a decision on the Servo-Bulgarian question. No one will know better than he how to utilize the presence here of so many highly placed personages. I will keep you fully informed, of course, of what goes on.

As regards your remarks respecting the "squaring" of Roumania, the necessity of such a policy is fully recognized here. It would be extremely badly received in Germany, however, for the reasons given in my despatch No. 119 of November 14 last.⁽³⁾ Setting aside this difficulty, it must be borne in mind that Roumania will desire some compensation:—she cannot obtain it from the side of Austria, however much she may desire to get a grip on Transylvania, and it does not seem as if she could get any compensation from Bulgaria without a war. She requires the so-called Quadrilateral (Rouschouk, Silistria, Shumla, Varna), and this Bulgaria would never cede except under compulsion. I scarcely think that Bulgaria will work on Roumania

(¹) [Carnock MSS., Vol. 1 of 1912.]

(²) [Not reproduced, as it cannot be traced.]

(³) [In Sir H. Bax-Ironside's despatch to Sir E. Grey, No. 119 of November 14, 1911, he says, "So long as King Carol remains under German influence and keeps on friendly terms with Turkey, so long can Germany view the present state of affairs with tranquillity." (F.O. 47207/44875/11/7.)]

through Vienna, though one must not neglect the possibility of such action: but it is more likely, in my opinion, either directly here or at St. Petersburg. Prince Ghika has not yet been approached in the matter, he has as you know, only recently arrived. I am keeping my eyes open as to this.

M. Panas, the Greek Minister, thinks that they may endeavour to work an arrangement through Petersburg, in order to obtain Russian influence; if they try this method, of which you would doubtless be kept informed from St. Petersburg, they will not, I anticipate, be successful, for reasons too long to state here.

The Bulgarian Minister in Bucharest is incompetent, and useless, and they will not enter into negotiations through him.

I quite agree as to no really serious troubles arising in the Balkans this spring. It seems practically certain that there will be an Albanian revolt, and that it will be more universal than previous ones; also we may expect the usual Macedonian programme of assassination and outrages, but Bulgaria certainly will not bell the cat, and is quite unlikely to resort to extreme measures unless Austria takes the lead. The King would much prefer to wait and see the fruit drop into his mouth, than have to shake the tree.

The relinquishing of office by Count Aerenthal or even his prolonged departure, will remove an element of stability, and although the influence of the Emperor will always remain on the side of peace, old age, and, I fear, in his case, a gradual decline of mental capacity, tend to put power into less cautious hands.

As regards my own position, with King Ferdinand, it is excellent so far. He has shown his friendliness by sending me gifts of books,—the life of Queen Caroline of Naples, his grandmother, (before I went home,) and on the New Year an Edition de Luxe of J. Funckau's Life of Emma, Lady Hamilton,—a truly royal gift, containing 70 coloured and other engravings.

King François' well-known phrase as regards women can well be applied to him.

Yours sincerely,

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

No. 545.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 5027/5027/12/89.

(No. 6.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. February 1, 1912.

R. February 5, 1912.

In his despatch No. 61 of September 27 last⁽²⁾ Sir R. Paget reported upon the violent attacks of the press against the Crown and the Government, and the feeling of unrest attributed to conspirator intrigues.

It would appear that the younger officers who took part in the murder of King Alexander and Queen Draga have for some time past been discontented with their treatment at the hands of the Court and also with the weak policy of the Radical Government. They realise that the Karageorgevitchs are no better than the Obrenovitchs, that neither the King nor the Crown Prince take any interest in military affairs, that the army does not progress like that for instance of Bulgaria in spite of the millions spent on it, that the country is ruled by men whose only object is to enrich themselves at the country's expense. They reproach the King and the Government with weakness and their object is to turn the Radicals out of power and to replace them by a strong Government, which would pursue a policy more in accordancè with Pan-Servian aspirations. With that object in view, they have formed a secret society under the name of "Union or Death," better known already as the

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 38389/32852/11/89.)]

"Black Hand."⁽³⁾ This society has of late been rapidly gaining ground until it now numbers among its members not only officers of all ranks, but also civilians of every stations of life. High officials are stated to be members and the Minister of War, General Stepanovitch, is supposed to be at the head of the movement, with practically the whole of the Belgrade garrison as well as the Police at his back. Such is the influence of the society that some of those most directly aimed at, such as the King, the Crown Prince and the Prime Minister, Monsieur Milovanovitch, have, it is rumoured, thought it expedient to join the "Black Hand," whose overt intentions, as mentioned before, are the pursuit of an active policy to unite the scattered members of the Serb race under one Flag. The present attitude of the King in regard to the position of the Ministry, which has scarcely a working majority in the Skupshina, would seem to confirm this rumour. M. Milovanovitch's intentions for some time past had been to force a dissolution and hold elections, which would have ensured the Radicals coming in again with a greater majority. But King Peter seeing the danger for himself of the return of the Radicals to power, made it, so it is stated, quite clear to M. Milovanovitch that he would not dissolve the Skupshina before the expiration of its mandate in the autumn. M. Milovanovitch being himself much impressed by the growing power of the "Black Hand," also saw that it would be more politic on his part to take sides with the Society, and hence the curious anomaly of those against whom the society was originally directed joining the movement.

To complicate matters, another society has been formed, named the "Servian Union." Its promoter, General Sreckovitch, a popular officer on the retired list, issued last week a manifesto to the Servian people, calling their attention to the rotten state of the army and urging all Reserve officers to become members of the Union, with the object of opposing the process of disorganisation now ruling in the army, and of furthering the Pan-Serb movement.

Although I have tried several well-informed sources, it is impossible to obtain satisfactory information as to the actual scope of the movements. But one thing is certain and that is that at least one powerful organisation headed by the Military does exist, and that its influence will have to be reckoned with as an important factor in the attitude of Servia in case of complications arising in the Balkans. The Government will not be allowed to remain passive. M. Milovanovitch's statements to me, as reported in my despatch No. 2 Confidential of the 16th ultimo,⁽⁴⁾ as to the aggressive policy of Servia in case of an Austrian advance into the Sandjak, would seem to corroborate that view.

All the Foreign Representatives, with whom I have spoken on the subject, are of opinion that the movement is, or will be, serious.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

⁽³⁾ [The activities of this society at this time are described in *O.-U.A.*, III, p. 539, No. 2911; p. 545, No. 2921; p. 549, No. 2928; p. 627, No. 3041; p. 806, No. 3264; and *ib.*, IV, p. 232, No. 3590. For other relevant literature *v.* references in B. E. Schmitt *The Coming of the War 1914* (1930), Vol. I, pp. 184-5, and S. B. Fay *The Origins of the World War* (2nd edition, 1930), Vol. II, pp. 111, *sq.*]

⁽⁴⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 533-4, No. 540]

No. 546.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 5357/4463/12/44.

(No. 54.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 5, 1912.

M. Cambon told me to-day that, in speaking to M. Poincaré the other day, you had referred to the anxieties of the international situation, and said that we ought to be prepared against developments.

M. Cambon expressed the opinion that the apprehensions which were felt, and so freely expressed, were exaggerated. So far as he could see, no one desired a conflict. He thought that Germany did not wish to have one; Austria would not do anything without Germany; and King Ferdinand of Bulgaria would not move without the consent of Austria, because otherwise Austria would let Roumania loose on the back of Bulgaria.

I said that a good deal of the anxiety seemed to me to arise from the wide spread belief in Germany that, if Germany increased her naval expenditure, we would attack her. In the course of the conversations,⁽¹⁾ which had been suspended some time ago, but would now be resumed, we should discover what the disposition of the German Government was.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [For this subject, *v Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. VI, *passim*. The question of the resumption of conversations in 1912 is dealt with in that volume, especially pp. 652-65.]

No. 547.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 5103/4463/12/44.

(No. 51.) Confidential.

Sir:—

Foreign Office, February 7, 1912.

M. Cambon read to Sir A. Nicolson on the 1st inst[ant] a telegram which M. Louis had sent from St. Petersburg, reporting a conversation with the Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] on S[outh]-E[astern] Europe Affairs. M. Louis had said that M. Poincaré having been told by the Russian Amb[assado]r at Paris that there was an "ardent desire" on the part of the Russian Gov[ernmen]t to exchange views with the French Cabinet, he would be glad to hear what M. Sazonof had to say; but that the French Gov[ernmen]t would be glad, if the situation in S[outh]-E[astern] Europe were to be discussed, that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t should also take part in the conversations. M. Sazonof said that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t might be invited to join later, but he wished to impress on the French Gov[ernmen]t how disquieting the aspect of affairs was in S[outh]-E[astern] Europe, and that the activity of the bands in Macedonia had never been so marked as at present. H[is] E[xc]cellency thought that Russia, France and England should put pressure at Sofia to suppress the activity of the bands, and should also press the Turks to introduce reforms in Macedonia which would remove the grievances which caused the formation of these bands.

Sir A. Nicolson told M. Cambon that, giving his personal opinion only, he much doubted if H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t would be disposed to take part in a conversation à trois which was to lead to exercising pressure at Sofia and to presenting a programme of reforms at Constantinople. It seemed to him that an exchange of views would be conducted with much greater advantage, and with more *raison d'être* between Vienna and St. Petersburg than between London, Paris and St. Petersburg. The two most directly interested Powers were Austria and Russia,⁽¹⁾ and it appeared futile that Russia, France and England should endeavour to exercise independently of Germany and Austria pressure at Sofia and Constantinople. Any such endeavours were doomed to failure from the outset, and if any steps were to be taken they should be taken by all 5 Powers, and initiated by Austria and Russia in conjunction.

M. Cambon said that personally he quite agreed.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [*op. supra*, pp. 529-32, No. 539.]

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

St. Petersburg, February 8, 1912.

Many thanks for your last letter.⁽²⁾

The English visit⁽³⁾ has been a wonderful success and has, I think, served to create a friendly feeling towards England such as has never before existed in this country. Weardale and his colleagues deserve the greatest credit for the manner in which they acquitted themselves of a by no means easy task, and for having delivered so many speeches without committing a single indiscretion. The German papers tried very unfairly to make capital out of a speech made by General Bethune at the Parliamentary dinner, and in some cases even pretended that he had expressed the hope that in the next war the British and Russian armies would fight side by side against Germany. His remarks, on the contrary, were of quite a general character. He had to reply to a toast proposed by a Russian General who had taken part in the Crimean war to the British veterans who still survived, and said, as any one would under such circumstances, that if war ever broke out he trusted that the British and Russian armies would not again find themselves face to face, but would fight shoulder to shoulder against a common enemy.

I cannot help hoping that the friendly feeling that has been generated by this visit will react favourably on the relations between the two Governments and will help to smooth over the difficulties and differences that so often arise between them. It would, I think, as I have already suggested, be a graceful act, which would be much appreciated here, were the King to write to the Emperor to thank Him not only for the very cordial reception which His Majesty accorded to the British representatives, but also for the universal kindness and hospitality which they received during their stay in Russia. Were His Majesty to command me to deliver His letter in person to the Emperor, it would furnish me with a good opportunity of laying before the latter Sir Edward's views with regard to Persia. The Empress told me that She was returning shortly to the Crimea, as the great cold affects Her heart and breathing so that if I am to ask for an audience I ought to do so soon.
...⁽⁴⁾

Yours ever,

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol I of 1912.]

⁽²⁾ [Sir A. Nicolson's letter of January 30, 1912, is not reproduced, as it is chiefly concerned with affairs in Persia. (Carnock MSS., Vol. I of 1912.)]

⁽³⁾ [The party included members of both Houses of Parliament, the Church, the Army and the Navy. The Speaker, Mr. James Lowther, who had been selected as the head of the delegation, was compelled by the death of his father to return home. v. Sir G. Buchanan: *My Mission to Russia* (1923), Vol I, pp. 107-9, and Sir Bernard Pares: *My Russian Memories* (1931), pp. 229-42.]

⁽⁴⁾ [The remainder of the letter relates to M. Sazonov's views on the Persian question and other subjects.]

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, February 12, 1912.

F.O. 6816/6816/12/7.

D. 1.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 18.) Most Confidential.

R. 2.45 P.M.

Bulgaria and Servia.

Owing to Count Aehrenthal's illness and the consequent difficulty of obtaining any official information from the Ministry I have had to have recourse to a private

source of information to obtain the views of the Austro-Hungarian Government with regard to rumours of rapprochement between Servia and Bulgaria mentioned in Sir A. Nicolson's private letter to me of Feb[ruary] 5.⁽¹⁾

I learn from this confidential source that the Austrian Ministry for F[oreign] A[ffairs] are perfectly well aware that negotiations of a kind are going on between Belgrade and Sofia, but so far they do not appear to attach any great importance to them nor do they look with alarm on the King of Bulgaria's proposed visit to Athens. I suspect that the King of Bulgaria has given here what are considered to be sufficient guarantees that he is doing nothing antagonistic to Austro-Hungarian interests in the Balkans.

I have sounded Count Berchtold with regard to rumours of rapprochement between Servia and Bulgaria. He had also heard them, but did not attach very great importance to them.

(Sent to Sofia.)

⁽¹⁾ [This letter (Carnock MSS., Vol. I of 1912) quoted an extract from Sir H. Bax-Ironside's private letter of January 31, 1912. *v. supra*, pp. 537-8, No. 544.]

No. 550.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 7118/7118/12/39.

(No. 10.) Confidential.

Sir

Belgrade, D. February 15, 1912.

R. February 19, 1912.

I have the honour to report that I had a conversation two days ago with the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the present political situation.

M. Yovanovitch chiefly went over old ground, and repeated the statements made to me by M. Milovanovitch as to Austrian activity in Albania, as reported in my despatch No. 2, Confidential, of the 16th ultimo.⁽²⁾ But he added that besides Austrian there were Italian agents as well working in that Province, and that the Servian Government had heard that arms and ammunition from Italian sources had been landed on the coast for the Albanians. The reports they were receiving from Northern Albania were not reassuring. The Albanians were already more active than at this time last year and the number of assaults committed by them on Serbs in Old Servia were daily increasing.—He said the reverse to the Italian Minister two days previously.—M. Yovanovitch also stated that the Servian Government knew for a positive fact that the Austrians, although they denied it, were daily sending ammunition and guns all along the Serbo-Bosnian frontier on the Drina. The difference in the railway gauge in the annexed provinces made the transport comparatively slow but men could be sent on later with much less difficulty. The Turkish Government were fully alive to the danger and they had within the last week been sending maxim guns into the Sandjak.

As to the relations between Servia and Bulgaria, M. Yovanovitch said that of late there seemed to be indications from Sofia that Bulgaria was beginning to realize that her future must ultimately be closely associated with that of Servia, for if Servia were absorbed by Austria and the way to Salonica were once open, this would mean the end of Bulgarian aspirations in Macedonia. Here I interrupted M. Yovanovitch and asked him whether he thought Russia would ever allow Austria to absorb Servia; surely, I said laughing, M. de Hartwig would not permit it. He smiled and, without giving a direct reply, went on where he had left off that the descent of Austria towards Salonica would mean a corresponding claim on the part of Russia and the

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch was sent to Constantinople (as No. 84) on March 4, and to Tehran (as No. 49), in print, on March 8. A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 533-4, No. 540.]

consequent hemming in of Bulgaria. The latter would, therefore, do well to identify her interests with those of Servia and come to an understanding with her. The only chance of safety for the Balkan States was that they should act together.

M. Yovanovitch then spoke of the grave condition of Count d'Aehrenthal's health, and that his death would mean the disappearance of the greatest Peace factor in the Dual Monarchy. He also spoke of the Grand Duke Andrew's visit to Vienna as a sign of a rapprochement between Russia and Austria, which in his opinion bode no good for Servia. M. Yovanovitch, whose tone was pessimistic throughout concluded by saying that he thought that this year would at last see the real beginning of the end of the Sick Man.

As to M. de Hartwig's Austrophobe attitude, which has so often been mentioned at Vienna, I have the honour, if I may venture a humble opinion, to state that it appears to me to have somewhat diminished since the departure of Count Forgach. Any way I am not sure that it actually represents the attitude of his Government and it is probably only another instance of a Russian diplomatist following a line of his own. It may be of interest to add that a Foreign Representative here, who does not wish to be mentioned, has confided to me that M. Sazonow had told their Ambassador at St. Petersburg that they were beginning to have enough of M. de Hartwig. I also hear that the latter has boasted to another of his colleagues that it was he who was directing all Russia's Persian policy from here during M. Sazonow's illness and that he had strongly urged that the only way of settling the question was by Russian troops marching into Tehran.

As to Russia having promised effective aid to Servia in case of Austrian aggression, this is quite possible. But Servia, in spite of her ever looking to her big Slav Brother for protection, has a strong latent mistrust of him founded on previous experience, hence her constant dread of an Austro-Russian understanding and her fear of being left in the lurch and bargained away by Russia.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

No. 551.

Sir F. Cantwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 7521/3700/12/3.

(No. 22.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. February 18, 1912.

R. February 21, 1912.

I have already communicated to you by telegram the melancholy intelligence of the death yesterday evening of Count Aehrenthal. His Excellency had been suffering for some two years from a malady of the blood known as leucæmia, which assumed an aggravated form at the end of last year and forced him to abandon his work. In the course of last month it became clear that Count Aehrenthal's condition was hopeless, and that it would be impossible to prolong his life for more than a short period.

The Emperor, though aware of this circumstance, refused to consider the question of Count Aehrenthal's successor until the latter (who did not at the time realize the gravity of his condition) should himself tender his resignation. His Imperial Majesty's appreciation of and respect for Count Aehrenthal was such that he wished to avoid taking any step which might cause pain or excitement to his Foreign Minister.

Finally, on February 16th, Count Aehrenthal, realizing that he would never again be able to take into his hands the guidance of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, begged the Emperor to accept his resignation and to appoint a successor.

His Imperial Majesty thereupon yesterday addressed the following gracious letter to Count Aehrenthal:—

“ Dear Count Aehrenthal,

“ In appreciation of the circumstances under which the state of your health has obliged you—to my deep regret—to beg to be relieved of the office of Minister of My House and of Foreign Affairs, I accede to your request and have accepted your resignation.

“ On this occasion I desire to assure you of My undiminished confidence not only in yourself but also in the policy which you have, in difficult conditions, pursued with circumspection and initiative and which ensures an abiding honour to your memory.

“ At the same time, I express to you my full recognition of and my warmest thanks for the loyal and excellent services which you have rendered with so much self-sacrifice to Me, to My House, and to the Monarchy.

“ As a mark of my continued affection I confer upon you the Grand Cross in brilliants of my Order of St. Stephen.”

FRANZ JOSEPH.

“ Vienna, February 17th, 1912.”

This letter must be considered, in the very remarkable circumstances under which it was written, as a strong proof of the Emperor's approval of the policy of which Count Aehrenthal was the embodiment and as a clear indication that that policy will be continued in the future.⁽¹⁾ Count Aehrenthal was already unconscious when this letter reached him, on the day of his death.

At midday Count Aehrenthal's condition became worse. The last sacraments were administered to him, and shortly afterwards Monsignor Rossi, the Uditore of the Papal Nunciature, came to bring the dying Minister the blessing of the Pope. At 7 o'clock the agony began: and at a quarter to ten Count Aehrenthal breathed his last, in the presence of Countess Aehrenthal and the members of his family.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

(1) [Count Berchtold was nominated the successor of Count Aehrenthal on February 17.]

No. 552.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 8235/4463/12/44.

(No. 58.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. February 21, 1912.

R. February 26, 1912.

In the course of the conversation reported in my immediately preceding despatch⁽²⁾ I explained to the Minister for Foreign Affairs the views of His Majesty's Government, as recorded in your despatch No. 51 of the 7th instant⁽³⁾ to Sir F. Bertie, with regard to the suggestion which Monsieur Sazonow is reported to have made to the French Ambassador at this Court that France, Russia and England should bring pressure to bear at Sofia for the purpose of securing the suppression of the bands, and should at the same time urge the Porte to introduce reforms into Macedonia.

Monsieur Sazonow at once said that there must have been a misunderstanding, as he had never put forward a concrete proposal of this nature in the conversations

(1) [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

(2) [*cp. supra*, p. 367, No. 369, and *note* (3).]

(3) [*v. supra*, p. 540, No. 547.]

which he had had with Monsieur Louis. What had happened was this. He had received from Monsieur Iswolsky a report of his conversation with Monsieur Poincaré and had been more than ever impressed with the seriousness of the situation in south-eastern Europe. He had felt that the time had come when the Powers ought to reflect as to the attitude which they would have to take in the event of their being confronted with a conflagration in the Balkans. He had therefore suggested that there might be a preliminary exchange of views between the Cabinets of London, Paris and St. Petersburg; but he had never contemplated taking any immediate or separate action either at Sofia or Constantinople, nor had he the slightest wish to see Europe split up into two opposing groups with regard to the Balkan question. He had, on the contrary, thought that if the three Powers of the triple *entente* could agree as to the best means of localising any conflict that might possibly break out in the Balkans, they might then consult with Austria and Germany with a view to bringing all the Powers into line. It had, His Excellency said, occurred to him that the object which he had in view might best be secured by inviting an exchange of views between Paris, London and St. Petersburg as to what ought to be done in certain eventualities, such as a rising in Albania; an incursion into Macedonia on the part of one of the Balkan States; a Turco-Bulgarian war; and possibly an Austrian occupation of the Sanjak.

My French colleague, to whom I have also spoken on the subject, tells me that his conversation with Monsieur Sazonow was of a purely academic character; that His Excellency had spoken of the increasing activity of the bands and of the failure of the Porte to carry out any reforms in Macedonia; that he had suggested that it might be useful for the Powers to reflect a little on the situation, so as not to be taken unprepared, should it become acute; but that he had put forward no definite proposal whatsoever and had confined himself to indicating certain points which might be made the subject of conversation later on.

Monsieur Sazonow said nothing to me with regard to the possibility of arriving at an understanding with Austria on the Balkan question. He told me however that not only had there been an exchange of very friendly telegrams between himself and Count Berchtold, but that the latter had assured the Russian Ambassador at Vienna of his earnest desire to establish really good relations between the two Empires. His Excellency added that Monsieur de Giers was to come to St. Petersburg in a few days; and though Monsieur Sazonow said nothing as to the object of his visit, it seems more than likely that His Excellency will bring with him further friendly messages from Count Berchtold which will probably lead to an exchange of views between the two Cabinets. There can, I think, be no doubt but that Count Berchtold, who had passed so many years of his diplomatic career at this Court, will do all in his power to bring about a *rapprochement*, if he does not even attempt to revive the old policy of a close understanding between the three Emperors. The appointment of Count Berchtold as Count Aehrenthal's successor has been received with much pleasure here; and the only criticism which Monsieur Sazonow made on it was that His Excellency was not likely to show the same independent spirit as his predecessor, and would be consequently far more under German influence.

While His Majesty's Government would no doubt view with satisfaction an improvement in the relations of Austria and Russia as tending to promote the cause of peace in the Near East, I do not think that it would be to our interest to encourage an Austro-Russian understanding on the Balkan question, except on the condition that all the other Powers were to be parties to it. It will be in your recollection that Count Aehrenthal declined to associate the other Powers in his declaration of policy which resulted from the views exchanged between himself and Monsieur Iswolsky in the spring of 1910: and I think that it is highly probable that Count Berchtold will adopt a similar attitude under similar circumstances. By the visit of the Grand Duke André to Vienna not only has the estrangement between the two Courts been removed, but relations between them have again been placed on a cordial

footing. The Grand Duke's visit was, I believe, arranged at an Audience which the Austrian Ambassador had with the Emperor a short time before; and His Imperial Highness's visit will probably shortly be returned by one of the Archdukes. At the same time Count Berchtold's appointment may very likely lead to an attempt being made to draw the Russian Government more within the Austro-German orbit than would be to the interests of either England or France. I do not, however think that such an attempt would be crowned with success, as there still exists in this country a profound distrust of Austria-Hungary. It is rather, I think, in the influence which Count Berchtold may bring to bear on the Emperor through the Austrian Court, supported as he would no doubt be by the Emperor William, that there seems to me to be any danger of our position at St. Petersburg being undermined by Austria and Germany.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

MINUTE

I agree with the last paragraph and do not think that we should encourage a rapprochement between Austria and Russia except on the conditions mentioned by Sir G. Buchanan. The Archduke is, it is known, in favour of a revival of the *Drei Kaiser Bund*.

The present action of M. Sazonow in intriguing with Italy about mediation is not however calculated to make a good impression at Vienna and there are indications that Germany and Austria realize what is happening.

L. M.
E. G.

No. 553.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 8486/8486/12/38.

(No. 66.) Secret.

St. Petersburg, D. February 24, 1912.

Sir,

R. February 27, 1912.

I had the honour of being received in Audience yesterday by the Emperor and of handing to His Majesty the Letter which the King had commanded me to deliver in person.

After assuring His Majesty how highly the King and His Majesty's Government had appreciated the gracious reception accorded by Him to the members of the British Deputation, as well as the warm welcome extended to them by all classes of His Majesty's subjects, I proceeded to speak of Lord Haldane's recent visit to Berlin in the terms authorised by Sir A. Nicolson's private telegram of the 18th of this month.⁽²⁾

The Emperor at once said that He had received the news of this visit with much pleasure. Russia had concluded an arrangement with Germany which had placed the relations with that Empire on a perfectly friendly footing; and it was not only natural but necessary in the cause of the world's peace that relations of a similar friendly character should be established between Germany and England.

I ventured to express my satisfaction at hearing His Majesty say this. The character of England's relations to Germany and Russia respectively had, I observed, been very happily described in a speech delivered by Lord Hugh Cecil at the Parliamentary dinner offered to the British Visitors. Lord Hugh had on that occasion remarked that nations were like individuals. They had feelings of friendship for a considerable number of other nations, but their feelings of affection were

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced, as the tenour is sufficiently indicated above. Carnock MSS., Vol. I of 1912.]

restricted to a select few, among whom Russia, in our case, occupied a chief place. I trusted that the relations which now so happily existed between the two countries would long be maintained; as I ventured to think that our experience of last year showed that the Triple Entente was a powerful factor for peace and for the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe. His Majesty expressed a cordial assent, adding that it was a curious fact that a national feeling of sympathy seemed to attract one more towards one nation than towards another. He went on to say, however, that he did not entertain any particular distrust of Germany except on one point: and that was her present attitude towards Turkey. He had more than once told the German Emperor, without receiving any satisfactory explanation, that he entirely failed to understand the reasons that had prompted His Majesty to supply the Ottoman army with German instructors. That Army had, thanks to Germany, acquired a high degree of efficiency; but, if ever called on to take the field, it would march either against Russia or against one of the Balkan States, who were allied to Russia by close ties of kinship and religion. Such a proceeding could not, therefore, be regarded by Him as a very friendly act. On my asking whether His Majesty suspected Germany of encouraging the Turks to push forward their frontier in the direction of Urumiah, the Emperor said that this was very difficult to prove; but that, whether with or without German encouragement, Turkey was continually occupying fresh strategical points, of which Russia and not Persia was the objective. In proof of this statement the Emperor produced a map on which were marked the various points actually in occupation of Turkish and Russian troops. In reply to my further enquiry as to what His Majesty thought was likely to be the outcome of the meeting of the Turco-Persian Frontier Commission, the Emperor remarked that, should it fail to arrive at a satisfactory settlement of this long outstanding question, we ought to insist on Turkey submitting it to the Hague Arbitration Tribunal.

As the conversation then turned to Persia, I explained to the Emperor at some length the very serious position with which we were confronted in the south, as well as the reasons which rendered it inadvisable for us to dispatch a large force from India to restore order and protect the caravan routes. I at the same time expressed the satisfaction felt by His Majesty's Government at the cordial co-operation which they were receiving from the Russian Government in affording both moral and material support to the Persian Government and more especially at the manner in which they had met our wishes with regard to the ex-Shah. I enumerated the causes which rendered it impossible for His Majesty's Government ever to recognise Mohammed Ali again and dwelt on the necessity of removing him and all other disturbing elements with the least possible delay. The Emperor observed that it was quite true that Mohammed Ali had been guilty of a breach of faith in returning to Persia, but that He trusted that after the warning addressed to him through the Russian Consul at Astrabad the ex-Shah would not long delay his departure. I replied that Mohammed Ali was still making difficulties about his pension and that according to the latest reports from Meshed the situation in that district was not altogether reassuring. I had also heard from Teheran that Mohammed Ali had declared that he would only bow before a direct order from the Emperor. I would, therefore, appeal to His Majesty to say the necessary word, should Mohammed Ali pay no attention to the communication addressed to him through the Russian Consul. The Emperor eventually said that if other means failed he would do as I had asked him to.

As regarded the general situation His Majesty expressed the hope that the united efforts now being made by the two Governments to strengthen the hands of the Persian Government would be crowned with success. When once the large loan had been arranged the first task which that Government ought to take in hand was the restoration of order throughout the country. The fiscal gendarmerie ought to be developed; a small army ought to be organised for garrisoning the more important towns: and the Cossack Brigade ought to be strengthened, so that it might act as the cavalry branch of that army. When once the maintenance of order was

guaranteed, all the Russian troops would be at once recalled. All would, however, depend on whether the Persian Government succeeded in finding capable officers to organise these forces. His Majesty said nothing with regard to the proposed constitutional changes which Monsieur Sazonow is anxious to introduce at Teheran.

In the course of our conversation the Emperor expressed much satisfaction at Count Berchtold's appointment as Count Aehrenthal's successor. It would, he thought, undoubtedly lead to the establishment of better relations between the two Empires. Count Berchtold had been placed in a very difficult position as Austrian Ambassador at St. Petersburg during the Balkan crisis of 1908 :^(*) and His Majesty had, He said, felt very sorry for him, as he was in no way responsible for what Count Aehrenthal had done. He was not however likely to show the same independent spirit as Count Aehrenthal with regard to Germany, and Austria would probably revert to her former rôle of a brilliant second.

I then ventured to ask whether His Majesty was sufficiently well acquainted with the Archduke Franz Ferdinand to be able to form an opinion of his qualifications as the future ruler of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Emperor replied that I had put a question which it was very difficult to answer. The last time that He had met the Archduke was at Mürzsteg in the autumn of 1908; and His Imperial Highness had then astonished and even shocked Him by his outspoken language about his future Hungarian subjects. His Majesty had, in fact, been obliged to point out that it was hardly becoming on the part of an Heir Apparent to hold such language to a foreign Sovereign. His Imperial Highness had, however, impressed His Majesty as a man of strong character with decided views of his own. At that particular moment the Archduke was much concerned with the subordinate position which Austria-Hungary occupied in the Triple Alliance, and had openly complained of the heavy hand with which Berlin kept Vienna in subjection to her. His idea then was to create a Slav kingdom within the Austro-Hungarian dominions and to substitute trialism for dualism. Such a policy, the Emperor remarked, would not, had it been realised, have tended to improve Austro-Russian relations. Since the Bosnian crisis, His Majesty continued, the Archduke's views had apparently undergone a complete change: and he was now the devoted friend and admirer of the Emperor William. He was also credited with entertaining anything but friendly sentiments for Italy and of favouring a forward policy in the Balkans. So long as the Emperor Franz Joseph lived there was no likelihood of any step being taken by Austria-Hungary that would endanger the maintenance of peace: but when once the aged Emperor had passed away, it was impossible to say what might happen.

The Emperor then proceeded to speak of the general situation in the Balkans, and to say that it did not cause Him quite so much preoccupation as it had at the beginning of the winter. The recent visit of the King of Montenegro had given him the opportunity of speaking very seriously to that Sovereign: and the assurances which he had received had been quite satisfactory. He had also charged the Grand Duke André, who had represented His Majesty at the celebration of the coming of age of the Crown Prince at Sofia, with messages to King Ferdinand and King Peter. Both these Sovereigns had sent Him, in reply, the most positive assurances of their pacific intentions. They had both, however, as well as the King of Montenegro, made one rather important reserv[ation], namely that if the Turks pursued an irritating and repressive policy with regard to their Christian subjects and if the ferment that existed in the frontier districts assumed serious proportions, it would be very difficult for them not to intervene. His Majesty admitted that the Turks had reason to complain of the activity of the bands, but said that they had themselves chiefly to thank for what was going on, as they had never attempted to carry out the promised reforms either in Macedonia or Albania. Russia, His Majesty added, desired to maintain good relations with Turkey and to live at peace with her: but if war broke out between Turkey and any of the Balkan States, there would be such an ebullition

(*) [*cp. Gooch and Temperley, Vol. V. v. Index of Persons, sub BERCHTOLD, COUNT VON.*]

of sympathetic feeling among the Slavs of Russia for the Balkan Slavs that even He would not be able to keep quiet or to look on at what was passing with folded arms. It was therefore in His Majesty's opinion advisable that the Powers of the triple *entente* should look ahead and consult together as to what they should do in certain eventualities, such as a war between Turkey and one of the Balkan States or a forward movement on the part of Austria, such as the occupation of the Sanjak.

I repeated to His Majesty what I had already told Monsieur Sazonow, that you wished to avoid any action that could possibly split up Europe into two hostile groups, and that on the contrary you would like if possible to secure the co-operation of all the Powers. It might perhaps be possible for Austria and Russia, as the Powers most directly interested, to come to some agreement, not confined to themselves alone, but of a character that would enable all the other Powers to be parties to it. This would, however, naturally be impossible were we to be confronted with the question of an Austrian occupation of the Sanjak.

This, the Emperor replied, was exactly the question which preoccupied Him most, and constituted one of the reasons for His advocating an exchange of views between Paris, London and St. Petersburg. An occupation of the Sanjak would be but the first step in an Austrian advance towards the *Ægean*: and it was therefore very necessary that it should not find us unprepared.

The Emperor also spoke of the grave anxiety which the Cretan question was causing Him. He could not, He said, hide from Himself the fact that the Protecting Powers were not altogether blameless in this matter and that at the time of the crisis of 1908 they had kept the Cretans quiet by giving them assurances that had raised expectations which had proved to be irrealisable. War between Turkey and Greece must, however, be avoided at all costs; and therefore if, as seemed to be the case, the reoccupation of the island was the only course left open to the Powers He would consent to join in it, much as He disliked the idea.

With regard to China the Emperor said that He much doubted whether a Republican régime could take firm root in a country with such secular traditions of Imperial rule. There was, however, nothing for the Powers to do but to wait and hope for the best, as intervention of any kind was at the present moment out of the question.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

MINUTES.

The Emperor's declarations could hardly be more friendly and satisfactory.

His distrust of Germany is perhaps a little uncalled for in so far as it concerns the instruction of the Turkish Army by German officers. He might find the same fault with us for allowing our officers to reorganise the Turkish Navy. Surely the object of Germany is primarily to make the Turkish Army pro-German and so secure the services of a valuable second, but not necessarily to make it anti-Russian.

As for the Turco-Persian frontier, it is doubtful whether a reference of the dispute to The Hague would be of advantage either to us or to Russia.

H[is] I[mperial] M[ajesty]'s attitude about Persia could not be better, especially as regards the Ex-Shah and the same applies to the Cretan question.

The subject of the Balkans is the most important one dealt with and there the action of Austria must be the determining factor in the situation.

? Approve Sir G. Buchanan's language.

H. N.

Feb[ruary] 27, 1912.

R. P. M.

I think the Emperor's fears are quite natural for the reasons which H[is] M[ajesty] gives.
L. M.

A very satisfactory audience. I quite understand the Emperor's remarks as to German officers organising the Turkish army and rendering it a weapon of great strength and efficiency—

to be used either against Balkan states (or indirectly against Russia) or against Russia directly in Asia. Indeed a strong military Turkey with a possible Pan Islamic programme has always been regarded by Russia as a danger.

A. N.
F. D. A.
E. G.

No. 554.

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 9848/9848/12/7.
(No. 22.) Confidential.

Sofia, D. February 24, 1912.

R. March 4, 1912.

Sir,

Some time having now elapsed since the departure of the Royal and Special Missions which visited this Capital on the occasion of the ceremonies in connection with the coming of age of His Royal Highness the Prince of Tirnovo, the present may perhaps be a favourable occasion for discussing the possible political results of so important a gathering. The fact that the five Crown Princes representing the Balkan States met at Sofia is a significant factor. The visit which has attracted the most attention, and was certainly of the highest importance, was that of the Crown Prince of Grèce.

For several years, diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and Greece had either been entirely interrupted, or had been of an extremely cold and formal description. The Greek Government were fortunate enough, however, to send an able representative here in 1909, in the person of M. Panas, at that time Secretary General at Athens: he has been successful in considerably ameliorating the relations between the two Governments, and the visit of the Crown Prince is largely due to his influence.

King Ferdinand's ambitions and abilities are well known to you; He has for many years dreamed of the creation of a Byzantine Empire, of which he would be the Emperor, with its capital at Constantinople. This dream has, however, gradually faded, and His Majesty's views are now turned towards the Confederation of the Balkan States, to be followed by the creation of a Balkan Empire, of which His Majesty, or his successor, would be the chief. At the first blush, this would also appear to be an unrealizable dream, but taking into consideration the finesse, astuteness, and industry of His Majesty, it would be rash to prophesy as to its non-fulfilment.

I am of opinion that after the demise of the Austrian Emperor His Majesty will openly throw in his lot with Russia, and will endeavour to marry the Crown Prince to one of the Emperor's daughters. He will, with Russia's consent, arrange a defensive alliance with Servia, to be followed by an arrangement with Greece, into which Montenegro will eventually be drawn. His Majesty fully realizes that during the lifetime of the King of Roumania it will be extremely difficult to come to any arrangement with that country, as Bulgaria would never consent to the cession of the Quadrilateral, or indeed to the cession of any Bulgarian territory to Roumania, and these appear to be the only terms upon which Roumanian friendship can, at present, be obtained.

The personality of the Roumanian Crown Prince appears, however, in King Ferdinand's estimation, to create a favourable ground on which to work.

If the Russian marriage were to fail, the King, "faute de mieux," would marry his son to a Roumanian Princess, and in any case his second son, Prince Cyril, is likely to find a wife at the Roumanian Court.

The visit of Prince Frederick-Leopold was a mere act of courtesy; His Royal Highness returned to Berlin through Bucharest, travelling with the Crown Prince of Roumania, and thus emphasizing, in a manner which was not particularly agreeable

to the Bulgarian Court, the fact that the Hohenzollern influence is paramount at Bucharest.

The visit of the Grand Duke André Vladimirovitch was particularly gratifying to the Bulgarian Court, in view of the personal friendship which formerly existed between the Grand Duke André's father and the King, and the eminent services rendered by the former to the cause of Bulgarian independence. The Grand Duke was given precedence over all other Royalties and he was flattered and treated with much respect.

The Archduke Charles Albert created a favourable impression, but no intimate political conversations were held with him.

To sum up, the meeting of the Grand Duke and the Archbishop at Sofia, followed by the visit of the former to Vienna, was a prelude to the establishment of the coming "rapprochement" between these two great Powers; the germ of a friendly political feeling between the Balkan States was sown during the recent visits, and, with care and fostering, it is likely to grow and fructify. It should always be borne in mind that, for reasons which I have had the honour to explain in previous despatches, King Ferdinand will endeavour to attain his political ambitions by peaceful means.

I have, &c.

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

No. 555.

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private and Most Confidential.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson :—

Sofia, February 26, 1912.

There has been much buzzing in the Austrian bee-hive lately, and the Legation must have received a hint from the Ballplatz, to endeavour to find out whether negotiations are proceeding between the Bulgarian and Servian Governments.

Two days after the despatch of Cartwright's telegram No. 18 to Sir E. Grey of February 12th,⁽²⁾ marked "Most confidential", the Austrian Military Attaché here bearded the Chief of the Staff, and endeavoured to extract information from him. General Fitcheff, who is kept in entire ignorance of these negotiations, denied their existence "in toto." Tarnowski sounded most of his colleagues, and two minor officials at the Ministry, who are said to be in Austrian pay, but without success. Meanwhile, the negotiations had been proceeding very actively up to yesterday, when a deadlock arose. The Prime Minister drew up a rough draft of a defensive alliance, and sketched out a line for a future extension of Bulgarian influence in Macedonia. This contained a clause to the effect that *in the case of the eventual break up of the Turkish Empire in Europe*, Bulgaria should consider all territory to the East of a line which I will define later, as an integral portion of her own kingdom, whilst that to the West of such a line should come under Servian influence.

A frontier was evolved both at Belgrade and Sofia, and it was naturally unacceptable to either party. A second attempt was then made. Gueshoff offered to concede Uskub and Küprülü to Servia, if Milovanovitch would consent to include the Struga valley, together with the village of the same name, in Bulgarian territory.

This place lies to the N.N.W. of Lake Ochrida, and it appears that Servia attaches much importance to its future possession. Before his departure for Vienna and Beaulieu, King Ferdinand had given way to the great pressure brought to bear on him by Gueshoff and Daneff, and had instructed the former, in the event of Servia agreeing to the Bulgarian proposals, to draw up the necessary papers for

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. II of 1912.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp 541-2, No. 549.]

his signature. A conference was held at Belgrade, and I gather that Milovanovitch was won over to give his consent to the Bulgarian proposals. However, M. Pasitsch, who, as you are aware, is very powerful in Serbia, supported by Hartwig, the Russian Minister in Belgrade, refused his assent, and that is how matters stand at present. Nekludow here is supporting the Bulgarian line, and Hartwig the Servian.

I will continue to keep you fully informed as to the state of these negotiations. If a defensive alliance between these two Powers is arranged, it would, in my opinion, tend to the preservation of peace in the Balkans. The only chance of success is that these negotiations should be kept entirely secret until concluded, and that no inkling whatever of them should reach the Austrian Government. The work is entirely carried on in M. Gueshoff's private house.

Meanwhile, I heard last night that King Ferdinand had instructed the Bulgarian Minister in Vienna to endeavour to make arrangements for his official reception by the Austrian Emperor at an early date.

Yours sincerely,
H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

No. 556.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 9875/9875/12/89.

(No. 11.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. February 29, 1912.

R. March 4, 1912.

The death of Count d'Aehrenthal naturally elicited considerable comment in the Belgrade Press; but considering its low level it behaved with surprising correctness, only two of the numerous rags inveighing against the late statesman in abusive language. The general view adopted of the political consequences of the death of His Excellency is that it will change nothing in Austria's attitude towards Serbia. Occasion is also taken to comment on Austrian and Russian policy as affecting this country, and in view of the almost coincident improvement in the relations between the two Empires, it may be of interest to quote some of the remarks made in this connection.

The "Pravda," organ of the Progressists, says: Most of the years spent abroad by Count d'Aehrenthal were spent in Russia and it was the thorough knowledge which he there acquired of Russia's worth that enabled him to proclaim the annexation of Bosnia. We Serbs, during the crisis that followed, consoled ourselves for the loss of Bosnia with the idea that Russia, owing to the damages caused by the Japanese war, was not ready to take action against Austria, otherwise that she would not have allowed the annexation to take place. However this is not true, for it becomes more and more evident every day that Russia would never have drawn the sword for Bosnia even had she been prepared. Russia had already ceded by special secret treaties those two Serb provinces to Austria. To-day again Russia is too much engaged in Asia and she will take good care not to come up against any Power in Europe. On the contrary, she is endeavouring to come to terms with Austria to have her hands free. The only reason why Russia was dissatisfied with the annexation of the provinces was simply that she herself obtained nothing in return. Commenting on Count Berchtold's appointment, the same paper remarks: It is not a mere chance that makes the Emperor choose a man whose knowledge of Russia and popularity in St. Petersburg are greater even than those of his predecessor, it is because Austria in all her endeavours to advance in the Balkans finds herself confronted by Russia, and it is therefore essential that the man responsible for her policy should have a thorough knowledge of Russian methods. It is easier to beat an adversary when you know him. For us Serbs, Count Berchtold is as

dangerous as Count d'Aehrenthal. He is even more dangerous, for he is younger and abler, and has a larger circle of influential friends. Berchtold is a rejuvenated Aehrenthal and the consequence will be a more active policy on the part of Austria in the Balkans.

The "Srpska Zastava," organ of the Liberal party says: Count Berchtold will endeavour to bring about an improvement in Austrian and Russian relations, a necessity which Count d'Aehrenthal had already seen. But this desire will not change the foreign policy of Austria which will remain imbued with imperialistic tendencies. What Count Berchtold will do will be to give more scope to that policy by coming to terms with Russia and thus having his hands freer. Serbs cannot therefore hope for any good to come out of an Austro-Russian rapprochement. Russia is ever ready to come to terms with Austria. In Vienna they know that full well and that is the reason they always laugh at us.

The "Moniteur Commercial," an independent paper of standing, after reviewing at length Count d'Aehrenthal's antagonistic policy to Russia in the Balkans, states: In spite of all he did Count d'Aehrenthal was able to re-establish normal relations with Russia. We shall now see whether Russia will allow herself to be cajoled by Count Berchtold into arrangements detrimental to herself and to all Slavs.

The "Samouprava," organ of the Government, merely published a long obituary notice but refrained from any commentary.

The "Politika" endeavours to console Servian public opinion with the remark that not much harm will come to Serb races out of an Austro-Russian rapprochement. According to its usual practice, that paper says, the Vienna press have suddenly changed their attitude towards Russia, they think they will beguile Russia, but in this they are mistaken for Russia cannot forget everything. The first thing that she can never forget is that Austria can never be trusted. That is a sufficient reason why events will not be altogether as Austria wishes in the Balkans.

These remarks of the "Politika" are worth noting, for that paper, besides being the semi-official organ is also in the pay of the Russian Legation. They are evidently intended to convey that Russia will not throw over Servia.

Confidential.—I have endeavoured to ascertain the feeling in official circles on an Austro-Russian rapprochement and I find that both M. Pashitch and M. Milovanovitch are optimistic about it, being confident that Russia will not abandon Servia. They even seem to hint that they have assurances on the point. But what the scope of these assurances may be, or whether they come merely from M. de Hartwig or from St. Petersburg itself, and in this there is a considerable difference, no one seems able to tell.

As to the relations between Servia and Bulgaria, concerning which M. Yovanovitch showed himself more hopeful a fortnight ago, as reported in my despatch No. 10 Confidential of the 15th instant,⁽¹⁾ it seems from a number of conversations I have had in well informed circles, that there may be something in the air tending to a rapprochement, but everyone is very vague about it. On the other hand, the Bulgarian Minister told me confidentially that it was absurd to think that Bulgaria would ever tie her hands by coming to any definite arrangement with Servia; her Government could never be trusted, and her army did not count. He said that the relations between the two countries were certainly improving, but that there was a great gap between that and any precise arrangement, in the practicability of which he did not himself believe.

It should be remembered that M. Spalaikovitch, the Servian Minister in Sofia was at the beck and call of M. de Hartwig when he was here as Secretary General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and is still in constant touch with him. He has been going backward and forward frequently during the past few months between Sofia and Belgrade and every time he has had long conferences at the Russian

(1) [*v. supra*, pp. 542-3, No. 550.]

Legation, when M. de Hartwig no doubt pressed his views, which he has for a long time been advocating, as to the desirability of a rapprochement. The facts are probably that the Bulgarian Government do not discourage the advances of the Servian Government, although they have no intention of coming to any arrangement, and on the other hand that M. Spalaikovitch, who though an able man is an enthusiast rather apt to be carried away by his convictions, may be inclined to adopt too sanguine a view and to take wishes for facts.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

MINUTE.

It is a curious estimate which makes Count Berchtold abler than his predecessor

H. N.
R. P. M.
L. M.

No. 557.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson.

Vienna, February 29, 1912.

Since I last wrote to you Aehrenthal has breathed his last, and he has been succeeded by Count Berchtold. The death of Count Aehrenthal is certainly a great loss, both to Austria-Hungary and to Europe, and the news of it has only been greeted with indifference in Germany. It is said that King Edward once observed that what was necessary in Europe was a "chef d'orchestre." Count Aehrenthal had little by little succeeded in a way in occupying that difficult position in the "Concert of Europe," and now that he is gone, every Power will begin to play its own tune in that "Concert," for there is no statesman, except perhaps Sir Edward Grey, who enjoys the authority to make the band play together.

It is satisfactory, however, to know that the Emperor has expressed a wish that the Aehrenthal policy shall be continued, but I foresee many difficulties in the way of this, for without a man of strong character at the helm to carry it through, the policy will become flabby, nerveless and uncertain. Let us hope that Count Berchtold, who has the best intentions in the world, may prove to be not merely a pupil but an emulator of Count Aehrenthal. He certainly knows the latter's views with regard to the great lines of Austro-Hungarian policy, and I have no doubt that he will do his level best to follow them, but I am somewhat afraid that if Germany brings strong pressure to bear upon him and starts a campaign against him, his nerve will give way and he will either yield to the pressure or, what is more likely, throw up the post in disgust. Baron Tucher, the Bavarian Minister here, who reflects the views of the German Embassy, spoke to me the other day most disparagingly of Count Berchtold. According to the Baron he was quite unfitted for the post he now holds, because he has never been in Berlin during his diplomatic career, and because he is soaked in Russian ideas and sympathies. Tschirschky, I am told, has spoken in the same sense to people here, so I am afraid that trouble is brewing for Count Berchtold in Berlin. Count Berchtold has told me that he very reluctantly accepted the succession to Aehrenthal, and that he only did so at the express desire of the Emperor, who told him that the reason which had led His Majesty to select him was his knowledge of Russia which marked him out as the man who was most likely to facilitate a "rapprochement" with that country.

Count Aehrenthal's policy may be said in a few words to have been as follows:—he was in favour of the continuance of the Triple Alliance as one created for the

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. II of 1912.]

maintenance of peace and not for the purposes of aggression—an Alliance devised for the protection of Central Europe from any attack from without. Shortly before his death Aehrenthal told Dr. Szeps, whom he frequently saw and with whom he was very intimate, that an alliance could only be lasting and real if made between equals, for if one of the parties to an alliance was much weaker than the other, the weaker was bound to be over-shadowed by the stronger, and that was sure to give rise to friction and trouble between them. He added that he had no intention of letting Austria-Hungary play a subordinate part in the alliance with Germany. As regards Italy, Aehrenthal was determined to do his utmost to maintain good relations with her, and he considered that her remaining in the Triple Alliance was essential to Austria-Hungary, for if she separated from it, Austria would have a permanent enemy on her southern frontier which would drive her back hopelessly into the arms of Germany. With Russia Aehrenthal desired to be on the best footing, and it was one of his great regrets that the annexation crisis and his personal dispute with M. Isvolsky, should have dug a gulf between Austria-Hungary and Russia. Since that crisis he had laboured unremittingly to bridge over that gulf, and as he died he had the satisfaction of knowing that a "détente" between St. Petersburg and Vienna was on the eve of being realized. With England and with France Aehrenthal desired to cultivate the best relations, in the first place because a quarrel with either of these countries made his task of keeping on good terms with Russia more difficult, and secondly, because if Austria was on good terms with England, France and Russia, she could offer more resistance to the exigencies and selfish demands of Germany. With regard to the Balkans, that part of Europe where Austrian interests are paramount, Aehrenthal, I believe, sincerely desired the maintenance of the "status quo," and he was determined to do nothing which would bring about a change in that part of Europe. If the Turkish Government should collapse and the political geography of the Balkan States have to be re-written, he was resolved to see that essential Austrian interests should not be injured by anything which might happen. With regard to this matter there are, I think, two points which must not be lost sight of: Austria will never allow Bulgaria to go to Salonika, nor will she admit that Servia shall ever penetrate to the Adriatic. I think that all other alterations which may occur in the Balkans are merely questions of detail for the Dual Monarchy.

When he was a dying man, Dr. Szeps tells me that Aehrenthal confessed that he might have made many errors of detail in carrying out his policy—what man has not made errors?—but that he sincerely believed that the main lines he had followed were the right ones, and he earnestly expressed the hope that his successor would keep close to them. It was not, however, Aehrenthal's abstract policy which I have tried to explain to you above which drew thousands into the streets of Vienna on the day of his funeral, but it was the feeling in the crowd that Count Aehrenthal had raised high the banner of the Hapsburg Monarchy which he had found almost ignored by the other European Powers when he came to office. The great demonstration of sympathy for the dead man on the day of his funeral was perhaps more a patriotic manifestation than one for the man himself who had always lived so retired a life that his personality was practically unknown to the people of Vienna for whom he was merely a name. . . . (2)

Yours truly,

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

(2) [The rest of this letter deals with the war in Tripoli and with Austro-Hungarian court news.]

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir A. Nicolson.

Tel. (Private and Secret.)⁽¹⁾

Sofia, March 14, 1912.

A secret treaty of friendship and alliance between Bulgaria and Serbia on lines foreshadowed in my series of private letters to you has been signed by Kings and Foreign Min[iste]rs of the 2 kingdoms.⁽²⁾ K[ing] of Bulgaria signed this morning after considerable pressure and King of Serbia on March 11.

The Emp[eror] of Russia and Russian Gov[ernmen]t are aware of the contents of the Treaty and former has taken a personal interest in its successful conclusion.

Bulgaria has now definitely thrown in her lot with Russia. I understand Russian Gov[ernmen]t will communicate conclusion of treaty to other Powers of Triple Entente and I suggest that any knowledge of its existence should be kept secret until information reaches H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnmen]t either from Russia or other sources.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. II of 1912.]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately succeeding document, *encl.*]

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir A. Nicolson

Private & Most Confidential.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson.

Sofia, March 14, 1912.

The secret negotiations which have been proceeding between the Bulgarian and Servian Governments, concerning which I have written you a series of private letters, commencing on October 23rd of last year,⁽²⁾ and concluding with that of the 26th ultimo,⁽³⁾ have now reached a successful termination. This information I am telegraphing to you to-day.⁽⁴⁾

The last difficulty, namely that of the inclusion of the Struga valley in Servian territory, has now been got over, by the Bulgarian Government ceding the point, and I send you, herewith, a rough translation of the Treaty of Alliance. It was signed at Belgrade by King Peter and M. Milovanovitch on the 11th instant, and it is to be signed to-day by King Ferdinand and M. Gueshoff. The King of Bulgaria refused to sign yesterday, as it was the 13th of the month.

I have myself seen the original draft of this Treaty; the Bulgarian version was in M. Gueshoff's own handwriting, and the Servian in that of M. Spalaikovitch, the Servian Minister in this capital. I made my translation, with assistance, from this draft.

King Ferdinand was most loath to sign the third Article during the lifetime of the Emperor Francis Joseph, as its provisions are directed against a forward movement on the part of the Austro-Hungarian Government in European Turkey. I consider the Treaty to be very favourable to Turkey, and this is largely due to Servian pressure.

Russia has made it a condition that the Treaty shall not be made known to any other Power without her consent. Thus it is of the highest importance that we should remain officially ignorant of its existence until it is communicated from St. Petersburg.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. II of 1912.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 513-4, No. 525.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 551-2, No. 555.]

⁽⁴⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

The Russian Representatives in Belgrade and Sofia, and through them the Russian Foreign Office, have been kept "au courant" with the course of the negotiations which have been proceeding regularly since the interview between M. Gueshoff and M. Milovanovitch, concerning which I reported to you in my letter of October 23rd last.⁽⁵⁾

Many difficulties have had to be surmounted in the course of the six months negotiations, and some of these arose in a quite unexpected quarter. The general goodwill of M. Daneff had to be obtained, the spheres of propaganda, together with a delimitation of the future frontier of the respective Kingdoms, in the case of the break up of European Turkey, had to be definitely decided upon. These have not been mentioned in the Treaty, as the Powers interested consider that the fact that Russia is aware of the arrangement come to is sufficient for the purpose.

All this has been successfully arranged, and I will send you a map at a later date.

As Russia has been cognizant of the "pourparlers", and has played a considerable rôle in the successful negotiation of the Treaty, she is considered in the light both of a witness and a guarantee of its execution by the Servian and Bulgarian Governments. This is especially important from the Servian point of view, because of King Ferdinand's character and lack of stability. M. Sazonoff exercised much influence on the Russian Representatives both in Belgrade and Sofia, and the matter was finally clinched by the Russian Emperor sending for the Bulgarian Military Attaché in Petersburg, and requesting him to inform the Bulgarian Minister of War, General Nikyphoroff, that he would view with favour a successful termination of these negotiations, and this personal pressure, added to that brought to bear by Gueshoff and Daneff, has at last decided King Ferdinand to cease his favourite "jeu de bascule", and to throw in his lot with Russia. By giving his consent to a defensive alliance with Serbia, he shows his determination to oppose, by force of arms any advance Southward by the Austrians.

Russia will doubtless shortly inform the other Powers of the Triple Entente of what has been done, and from the reference made to this subject by the Emperor, as reported to Sir E. Grey by Sir G. Buchanan in his despatch No. 66 Secret,⁽⁶⁾ it would seem to be His Majesty's wish that the Powers of the Triple Entente should consult as to the line of policy to be adopted in certain eventualities in the Balkans.

We may expect that negotiations will soon be entered into between Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece, and, if successful, with Montenegro, and later perhaps also with Roumania.

The foundation has now been laid of a Federation of the Balkan States, backed by Russia, to oppose a forward movement on the part of Austria in the Sandjak.

At the moment of writing this King Ferdinand has not signed, but the Messenger is just leaving. I hope to hear that he has signed this morning.

Yours sincerely,

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

P.S. 12.45 p.m. I have just received the news that King Ferdinand has signed.

H. B. I.

Enclosure in No. 559.

Rough Translation into French from Bulgarian and Servian Original.⁽⁷⁾

Traité d'Amitié et d'Alliance entre les Royaumes de Boulgarie et de Serbie.

Art. I. Préambule.

Art. II. Les deux États se garantissent réciproquement et d'une manière absolue l'indépendance et l'intégrité de leurs territoires.

⁽⁵⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 513-4, No. 525.]

⁽⁶⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 546-9, No. 558.]

⁽⁷⁾ [The text of this treaty is printed *infra*, pp. 781-2, App. V.]

Art. III. Les deux États s'obligent d'employer toutes leurs forces contre toute Grande Puissance qui essaierait d'annexer ou d'occuper, ne fût-ce que provisoirement, n'importe quelle partie de territoire Balkanique qui se trouve aujourd'hui sous l'autorité de la Turquie. Après une guerre, les deux Puissances feront la paix d'un commun accord.

Art. IV. Les deux pays conclueront une Convention Militaire après la signature du traité, dans laquelle on déterminera les obligations militaires des deux pays en temps de guerre, le nombre de troupes, et les rapports entre les deux commandements.

Art. V. La durée du Traité sera jusqu'à la fin de 1920.

(Note). Certain details then follow as to the drawing up of the Treaty.

Art. VI. Ce Traité pourra être publié ou communiqué aux autres États seulement après entente préalable entre les deux Hautes Parties Contractantes, assemblées dans ce but. Un autre pays peut être reçu dans l'alliance après entente préalable entre les deux États.

Signatures.

King of Bulgaria.
M. Gueshoff.

King of Servia.
M. Milovanovitch

No. 560.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir F. Cartwright.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Cartwright,

Foreign Office, March 18, 1912.

I am much obliged to you for your letter of the 14th instant.⁽²⁾ I am afraid I have not much time to write you fully to-day, for I happen to be more occupied than usual and have very little leisure time. There is one point, however, which I wish to mention to you, but only for your own private and confidential information, as it is at present a matter of profound secrecy and which I should not at all like to be disclosed by us. I therefore beg you to keep it entirely to yourself. I tell you it as I should like to have your opinion. Bulgaria and Servia quite recently signed a Treaty of Friendship and of Alliance, and the main point of this Convention is that the two States engage to employ all their forces against any third Power who might attack, annex or occupy, even provisionally, any portion of Balkan territory, which is at present under the authority of Turkey. I am told that this Treaty has been negotiated under the inspiration of Russia and with the entire approval of the Russian Government. It is signed by the two Sovereigns and also by the respective Ministers. I am surprised that King Ferdinand was induced to take such a step of this nature. However, it will probably sooner or later leak out, and I should think that the view which will be held by Austria in regard to Servia's action will be a pretty serious one. It is most unfortunate that such a Convention has been concluded, especially under Russian auspices, as it shows that the Russian Government have no intention to work hand in hand with the Austrian Government in Balkan affairs, and this, personally, I much regret. I should not be surprised before long that King Ferdinand will repent of the step which he has taken and will endeavour to reinsure himself by some means or another. To me it seems almost childish that Bulgaria and Servia can imagine that they can resist the advance of any great Power, unless they were assured of Russian support. I again beg you to keep this information entirely to

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. II of 1912.]

⁽²⁾ [This letter is not reproduced, as it is chiefly concerned with attempts at mediation between Italy and Turkey. (Carnock MSS., Vol. II of 1912.)]

yourself and not to mention it to your French colleague or anyone at all. We have received it in a private form and have not even allowed it to go into the department. I only tell it to you and no one else as I think you may be able to give me some interesting views on the subject. I trust that you will embody them in a private and personal letter,⁽³⁾ apart from the one which you usually write to me.

[Yours, &c.

A. NICOLSON.]

(3) [The text of the letter written by Sir F. Cartwright in reply to this request is given *infra*, pp. 783-4, *App. V.*]

No. 561.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Pera. March 20, 1912.

So far from Tcharykow's departure being taken with indifference, it has called forth almost universal expressions of regret, except of course socially. The Turks are sorry, for Tcharykow always smoothed down the disagreeable messages he had to give and the Balkan representatives lament likewise. The German and Austrian Ambassadors can hardly conceal their delight, for the change is said to portend a return to the more bullying methods of Russia and it is expected that the Young Turks when no longer flattered by the representative of the Czar, will submit more readily to the blandishments of Germany, and disregard the kind expressions of the two friends of the snake in the grass. I hope Russia does not mean to adopt a disagreeable policy here. It will make our position and that of the French very difficult.

Assim says that the only reason he knows of for the recall of Tcharykow is the Straits question, in which Tcharykow declared when Sazonow practically disowned him, that he had been acting on the instructions of the Foreign Office, but that Sazonow being away knew nothing of it. . . .⁽²⁾

Yours ever,

GERARD LOWTHER.

(1) [Carnock MSS., Vol. II of 1912]

(2) [The rest of this letter is of a general nature and deals with changes in the Diplomatic Staff of different Powers.]

No. 562.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 12852/12852/12/38.

(No. 97.)

St. Petersburg, D. March 21, 1912.

Sir,

R. March 26, 1912.

I have the honour to report that the "Novoe Vremya" of March 18, published an interview with "a recent arrival from the shores of the Bosphorus" on the recall of Monsieur Tcharykow.

In to-day's issue of the same paper all official responsibility for the contents of the article is repudiated, and it is denied that the person interviewed is in any way connected with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the same time the substance of

the article argues at least a fairly intimate acquaintance with the affairs of the Ministry.

The unknown individual from Constantinople began by saying that Monsieur Tcharykow's friends represented him as the victim of an intrigue and his recall as being due to the fact that he was proving a dangerous rival. His enemies on the other hand maintain that he ought to have been recalled long ago. An Ambassador should not be a puppet in the hands of a foreign Government, but should pay due heed to instructions and to the policy of the head of his Department. Monsieur Tcharykow, however, in spite of private warnings of the danger of his action, had persistently ignored the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and had continually taken an entirely independent line, totally disregarding the instructions and policy of Monsieur Sazonow and of Monsieur Nératow while the latter was in charge of the Ministry. An impossible situation had thus been created, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been reduced to impotence.

As concrete examples in support of these statements the person interviewed cited the question of the Dardanelles, which he declared that Monsieur Tcharykow had raised on his own initiative and had continued to negotiate notwithstanding that he had been instructed not to do so and had been informed that the moment was inopportune for raising this question. Even when the Turkish Government had given an unfavourable reply he had continued his *pourparlers*. Correspondence between the Ministry and Monsieur Tcharykow only drew a reply from the latter in which he insisted on his own point of view and declared his independence in this and in other matters of policy. The final result has been to create an atmosphere unfavourable to Russia in Constantinople.

Further tension between Monsieur Sazonow and Monsieur Tcharykow was produced by the latter's *démarche* in regard to Turkish action in the province of Urumia. Some time ago information was received in St. Petersburg which proved beyond all doubt Turkey's intention to take undue advantage of the unrest in Persia in order to establish herself in that province. Monsieur Tcharykow however protested that the action of the Turks was misunderstood, that the Ottoman Government had frankly confided to him their real ideas and motives, and that Turkey was only desirous of being on good terms with Russia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on receiving yet further confirmation of their previous views on this subject, repeated their instructions to Constantinople; but the only reply was an indignant denial of the truth of the information received.

Another unfortunate step was taken by Monsieur Tcharykow on his own initiative in regard to a federation of the Balkan States, the result being a fresh defeat for Russian diplomacy. Such a question is at present outside the realm of practical politics, and is fit only for sensational newspaper articles.

All these rebuffs to Russia are bound to impair Turco-Russian relations, and Russia's foes naturally take full advantage of them.

The correspondent of the paper asked if it was not true, nevertheless, that Monsieur Tcharykow enjoys considerable influence in Turkish Government circles, but the gentleman interviewed replied that this was formerly the case but is so no longer. The Turks were quick to see that Monsieur Tcharykow was a convinced optimist, and a perusal of his despatches would show that he had consistently adopted the Turkish view in all matters under discussion. Previous to his appointment the Russian Government had three times saved Turkey from war, and yet Turkey's only response was to take advantage of the unrest in Persia to pursue an unfriendly policy towards Russia. The Ministry pointed this out to Monsieur Tcharykow in vain; he still insisted that the Turks were really friendly, and that patience and time alone were needed.

As an instance of how the Turkish Government imposed on the Russian Ambassador, the Armstrong contract for the construction of the Turkish fleet might be cited. Monsieur Tcharykow wrote a despatch to the effect that owing to his advice the Porte had deferred constructing cruisers and signing a contract for four years, and

that the building of the ships would take three years. The next day the Porte signed the contract with Armstrong, by which all work was to be completed within two and a-half years.

Again, as regards mediation between Turkey and Italy. Monsieur Tcharykow decided that any Russian efforts in this direction were doomed to failure and therefore showed great disinclination to co-operate with his Government in the matter. As might be imagined, all this taken together had created a situation which even M. Tcharykow had to admit was impossible. He refused however to mend his ways or admit his mistakes.

Nevertheless the Ministry had not treated him harshly. He will still receive a salary of 15,000 roubles a year, and will remain in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Yet one more instance: Monsieur Tcharykow declared emphatically that as a result of the measures taken by the Turks a fresh rising in Albania was absolutely impossible. But on March 17 a telegram announced that the rising had already begun and the situation was "very serious." Monsieur Tcharykow is a man of strong independent views and a strong Nationalist; he also considers that an Ambassador is a representative of the Emperor alone, and that it is incumbent on him to act on his own initiative and not merely to be the mouthpiece of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

MINUTE.

The paragraph respecting Russian opposition to the Armstrong contract is interesting.

L. M.
A. N.
E. G.

No. 563.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

St. Petersburg, March 21, 1912.

Many thanks for your letter.⁽²⁾

The chief event of the last fortnight has been the sudden recall of Tcharykow. His transfer from Constantinople to another post would not have created any surprise, as it was known that he did not see eye to eye with his Government with regard to Turkish affairs, but nothing has so far transpired that explains the reason for his having been dismissed the service in such a peremptory fashion and for his having been relegated to the Senate instead of, like other ex-Ambassadors, being appointed to the Council of Empire. Sazonow told me in confidence that Tcharykow had been making a mess of things for some time past and had persisted in disregarding what he knew to be the views of his own Government. During the conversations which took place between him and Said Pasha last October with regard to the question of the Straits, he had received the most categorical instructions to keep within certain clearly-defined limits. He had, however, as Sazonow put it, "jumped over all the barriers"; on one occasion he had telegraphed saying that if [he] had understood his instructions aright he would have to do something which Sazonow did not specify; and he had been told in reply that he was on no account to do it. He nevertheless *did* it.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. II of 1912.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. The identification is uncertain, but it is probably Sir A. Nicolson's letter of March 12, which mentioned M. Sazonov's mediation proposals and a letter from Sir G. Lowther on the subject. It did not add substantially to information obtained elsewhere. (Carnock MSS., Vol. II of 1912.)]

Then came the mediation proposals. Sazonow had told him that he did not wish the Ambassadors to move in the matter, as he preferred discussing the question directly with the other Governments. Tcharykow had thereupon begun intriguing and had worked directly against his own Government. Sazonow remarked that he had no objection to Ambassadors holding views of their own—and those of Tcharykow were ultra Turcophil—but it was impossible to allow an Ambassador to give effect to such views when they were in opposition to the policy prescribed by his Government.

All this, however, does not explain what was the last drop that caused the cup to overflow. On Tuesday in last week Sazonow saw the Emperor, and, according to all accounts, nothing was then said about Tcharykow's immediate recall. On the following Friday an order was signed by the Emperor to the effect that Tcharykow was to be recalled at once and appointed to the Senate. As Kokovtsoff had had an Audience of His Majesty on that day, some people imagine that it was he who on his own initiative had induced the Emperor to issue this order. I do not myself believe that Kokovtsoff had anything to do with the business. What I think really happened was that between Tuesday and Friday Tcharykow wrote or telegraphed something which displeased the Emperor so much that His Majesty ordered his immediate recall. What the particular something was it is difficult to say; but I expect that it had reference to the Turkish encroachments in the Urumia district. . . .⁽³⁾

Ever yours,

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

⁽³⁾ [The omitted paragraphs refer to the Turco-Persian frontier question, Russian military preparations, and internal affairs.]

No. 564.

Minutes by Sir Eyre Crowe, Sir A. Nicolson and Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 14053/14053/12/38.

March 27, 1912.

Sir Francis Oppenheimer, with whom I discussed yesterday the position now held in German public opinion by Herr von Kiderlen, told me, although he could not vouch for the absolute truth of the statement, that it was commonly understood in well-informed quarters, that Herr von Kiderlen had scored a great triumph in the Potsdam arrangement with Russia,⁽¹⁾ under which Russia had agreed to move the bulk of the enormous Russian forces hitherto stationed on Prussia's eastern frontier, far into the interior of Russia, thereby materially relieving the strain and diminishing the necessity of immediate counterpreparations in those localities.

E. A. C.

I think a misapprehension exists—Russia, with the full concurrence of the French General Staff, is reorganising her mobilization scheme—and would now mobilize *behind* the Vistula—not “far into the interior of Russia”—This I know for a fact. Moreover the comm[unicatio]ns between the Russian and French General Staffs are very frequent and intricate, and we may be quite assured that the rumoured agreement at Potsdam in regard to these military matters is a legend.

A. N.

The “well informed quarters” are no doubt informed by Herr von Kiderlen.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [The arrangements made at Potsdam will be referred to in a later volume.]

No. 565.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 13727/13727/12/39.

(No. 18.) Secret.

Belgrade, D. March 28, 1912.

Sir,

R. April 1, 1912.

I have the honour to report that one of the foreign Representatives here, who is always particularly well-informed and generally reliable, told me this morning in the course of conversation that he understood that the relations between Serbia and Bulgaria were so far improved that an understanding had been arrived at between the two countries to move together in case of any third party advancing into the Balkan Peninsula. He did not believe there was any formal agreement, but only an understanding.

It would seem that Serbia and Bulgaria are longing for Italian action against Turkey in Europe and I was told and begged to keep the information secret, that the Italian Minister here has on more than one occasion been unofficially approached with offers of assistance in Macedonia in case Italy should desire combined action. To these offers the Italian Minister is said to have invariably replied that his Government's policy is the maintenance of the Status Quo in the Balkans, and to have given the advice to Serbia to keep quiet.

Whether it is true that Italy has refused these advances of Serbia, or whether negotiations are actually going on between Serbia and Bulgaria on the one hand and Italy on the other for simultaneous action it is impossible to tell. It hardly seems likely however that Italy would gratuitously stir such a hornet's nest.

I have also heard that Monsieur Sazonow had recently proposed to the Austro-Hungarian Government a formula of agreement by which Russia and Austria would undertake not to make any forward movement in the Balkans. The Austrian reply had been merely that the policy of Austria was that of the maintenance of the Status Quo, and that a formal agreement on the lines suggested seemed therefore unnecessary.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

MINUTES.

It would have been of more interest if Mr. Barclay had told us the name of the foreign Rep[re]sen[tative]. I sh[ou]ld doubt the accuracy of the inform[atio]n as to M. Sazonow approaching Vienna.

Mr. Barclay tells me it was the Italian Min[iste]r.

A. N.

H. N.

E. G.

No. 566.

*Sir H. Baz-Ironside to Sir A. Nicolson.*Private and Secret.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Sofia, March 28, 1912.

Soon after writing my letter to you of the 14th inst[ant],⁽²⁾ M. Gueshoff asked me to call on him at his private house. He told me that it was only after long and serious consideration that he had adopted his new policy of concluding a secret

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. II of 1912]⁽²⁾ [v supra, pp. 558-7, No. 559.]

treaty of friendship and alliance with Servia, and that it required considerable persuasion to win over the King and M. Daneff to his views.

He was most anxious that no one in London should be cognizant of this treaty, except Sir E. Grey and yourself, until the Russian Government made their arrangements as to disclosing its contents. He further expressed the hope that his policy would meet with Sir E. Grey's approval; it was in his opinion, the most likely one to secure peace in the Balkans.

Any Power advancing into European Turkey would now be faced with solid hostility on the part of Bulgaria and Servia, backed up by Russia, and, he hoped, by the Triple Entente if necessary.

He personally confirmed to me the information which I conveyed to you,⁽³⁾ to the effect that the Russian Emperor himself sent for the Bulgarian Military Attaché in St. Petersburg, just prior to the latter's going on leave, and expressed to him his wish for a successful termination to the negotiations which were then proceeding.

M. Gueshoff believes that the policy of a loose Federation of the Balkan States, or, to be more accurate, the conclusion of treaties of Friendship and Alliance between Bulgaria, Servia, Greece and Montenegro, for the maintenance of the "status quo," under the aegis of Russia and with the goodwill of Turkey, is the best policy for the maintenance of peace. He is of opinion that if Austria is faced by such a combination she will not occupy the Sandjak, but will content herself with economic benefits.

I gather that after Easter M. Daneff, on the part of the Bulgarian, and M. Pasitch, on the part of the Servian Government, will proceed to Petersburg to communicate the Treaty officially to the Russian Government, who will then acquaint the other members of the Entente with its existence, and explain Russia's views: meanwhile, it seems probable that they will, after this, approach Greece to join the Federation, on the understanding, however, that the Cretan question be entirely excluded from the programme. . . .⁽⁴⁾

Yours sincerely,

H. O. BAX-IRNSIDE.

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 557, No. 559.]

⁽⁴⁾ [The succeeding paragraphs are entirely personal.]

No. 567.

Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private and Most Confidential.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Sofia, April 8, 1912.

I am venturing to send you, with apologies for its length, this letter containing my views with regard to pending developments in Balkan politics.

In your letter of March 18th⁽²⁾ you write, "I should have liked to have seen all the Balkan States confederate for the maintenance of the 'status quo' under the aegis of Russia and Austria."

Such an arrangement would be an ideal one, but we have, alas! to put up with a less satisfactory standard in this world.

The solution of the Balkan problem will, I think, be found in the expression quoted in your letter with the omission of the words "and Austria."

In my despatch No. 8 Confidential of the 15th January⁽³⁾ I gave what I considered to be cogent reasons for Russia's not standing by with folded arms, were a catastrophe to arise. To those reasons, which still hold good, I would wish

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS, Vol. IV of 1912.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced, as the letter cannot be traced.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 529-32, No. 539.]

to add the following. Russia has suffered two great defeats in recent years—the first known to and appreciated by the whole of the civilised world, namely their overthrow in the Japanese war—; the second, her want of success in opposing Count Aehrenthal's policy in the Balkan Peninsula. This latter, a diplomatic defeat, although not appreciated outside the circles of European Chanceries, was, and is still I believe to-day, more bitterly felt by His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia than the disaster suffered by his armies on the field of battle. The truth of this has been borne in upon me from several quarters; from remarks made by His Imperial Majesty to the present Bulgarian Minister of War in a private interview held at Tsarskoe Selo; from a conversation which he held with the Bulgarian Military Attaché at Petersburg, concerning which I wrote to you in my private [letter] of the 14th ultimo;⁽⁴⁾ from remarks made to M. Milovanović and other responsible people at the wedding of the Servian Princess; from His Imperial Majesty's visit to Racconigi,⁽⁵⁾ when he carefully avoided putting his foot on Austrian territory, both on his journey there and on his return, and lastly from his distaste at the too cordial greeting offered to the Grand Duke André by the Emperor and high Austrian officials, which was far from being agreeable to His Imperial Majesty. I hear the General in charge of the Mission has received tokens of the Emperor's displeasure.

As may be gathered from Sir George Buchanan's despatch No. 66 Secret of February the 24th,⁽⁶⁾ His Imperial Majesty has a profound distrust of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. This distrust is shared to the full, both by King Ferdinand and by Servian Statesmen of the calibre of MM. Pasić and Milovanović, (Bulgaria has no real "Hommes d'Etat"), and this suspicion is at the bottom of present developments.

I am of opinion that all advice tendered to the Emperor direct, to come to terms with Austria, is profoundly distasteful to him, and that, whilst he is doubtless anxious, for diplomatic reasons, for an official "détente" in the relations between the two Empires, he would be satisfied to, and he will, limit his action within such bounds.

We must remember that all arrangements that have hitherto been made between Russia and Austria—to quote only two—the one of 1897 and the one of Mürzsteg in 1903—have turned out unfavourably for the former country and have only resulted in diminishing her prestige amongst the Balkan peoples. It is not likely that His Imperial Majesty will commence a fresh series.

A federation of the Balkan States under his "aegis" would not only enable him to stay an Austrian advance into [the] Sanjak, but, if supported, as Russia would expect to be in case of necessity, by the other members of the Triple Entente, it would cause the realisation of the policy of the Balkans for the Balkan States, a policy which would not have been acceptable to Russia in the time of Stambouloff, but which has been forced on her by the stress of circumstances.

Should Greece join Bulgaria and Servia in a treaty of alliance, an event which will probably be a "fait accompli" this very spring, and should it be known that this alliance is supported by Russia, such a barrier would be opposed to Austrian aims and designs that even the Archduke would hesitate to launch his legions southwards. He would most certainly not do so without consultation at Berlin.

Here, for several reasons too lengthy to enumerate in this letter, (one of the chief of which, however, is the arrangement with Russia at Potsdam), he would receive a check. Still, his disposition appears to be such that no one can count on his refraining from undertaking even a foolhardy enterprise.

From our point of view, it appears to me that we may regard present developments on the whole as the commencement of a fairly satisfactory solution of a most difficult problem.

(4) [v. *supra*, pp. 556-7, No. 559.]

(5) [v. *supra*, p. 79, No. 70, *note* (1), and p. 126, No. 112, and *min.*]

(6) [v. *supra*, pp. 546-9, No. 553.]

Your ideal solution I regard as impossible of accomplishment, not only because of the personal feelings of the Emperor of Russia, but because it would not satisfy the future aspirations of the Balkan States.

Should Austria once occupy the Sanjak, the absorption of Servia would necessarily follow: it would be but the first and decisive step in the advance towards the Aegean and Salonica, and it would create grave troubles and discontent both in Greece, Bulgaria and Montenegro. I am convinced also that Russia would consider such a move as a "casus belli." The plan now in process of creation will, in all probability, prevent such an advance and it can only fail by Austria engaging in a war which, taking all factors into consideration, would prove disastrous for her. It will be of much interest to note Russia's next move: from this we should gain a criterion as to M. Sazonoff's statesmanship, which, in my humble opinion, has not as yet shown itself to be of a very high order.

Should the Federation Policy be successful, we may look to an absorption of the Sanjak in time to come by Montenegro and Servia, and the eventual fusion of these States in one Kingdom: the peoples are of one race, religion and language, and only the dynasties divide them; the least virile will eventually succumb.

A weakening of the Central Government at Constantinople might at any moment upset calculations, however, and we must recollect that a united Bulgaria and Servia are more likely to take the field against Turkey, especially when certain of Russia's support, than when they are divided and hostile. This is the darker side of the picture.

I note the Greek press are already beginning to talk of the necessity of a Greco-Bulgarian "entente" in the sense of my previous letters.

To sum up: we cannot alter the Emperor's private feelings, our interests are secondary, and can only become vital if Germany actively intervenes on the Austrian side.

We must bear in mind that one of the chief reasons for Russia remaining in the "Triple Entente" is the hope, and I may say from her point of view, the certainty, of a favourable solution of her Balkan policy, and she now expects to impose this policy on Austria by confronting her with a solid phalanx of Federated Balkan States with the motto, "The Balkans for the Balkan States."

If Austria will be satisfied with a relinquishment of her political plans by obtaining economic concessions in S.E. Europe, and confining herself to the material development of her Empire, and especially to the improvement of her recently annexed provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, there seems to be no reason why the Balkan States, at the present time, a perennial source of trouble, should not develop peaceably, and become a second Scandinavia, waiting patiently until the disintegration of European Turkey, for the Vilayets to fall into their laps.

Yours sincerely,

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

No. 568.

Sin H. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 20154/20154/12/7.

(No. 40.) Very Confidential.

Sir,

Sofia, D. April 29, 1912.

R. May 18, 1912.

I have the honour to report that M. Daneff, President of the Sobranjé, called on me on the 16th instant.

As you are aware, although not holding an official position in the Cabinet, four members of his party are of Cabinet rank, and he is considered by the nation as

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

jointly responsible with the President of the Council for the actions of the present Government Coalition.

M. Daneff discussed, at some length, the situation in the Balkans. He frankly stated that at one time he had hoped that Bulgaria would be able to take advantage of the Turco-Italian war, but that he now realised that Italy was not in a position to carry on an immediate successful policy against the Ottoman Empire, and that, unless the present situation altered very considerably, Bulgaria would make no forward move.

M. Daneff then touched on the possibility of the creation of closer political ties between Bulgaria and Greece: he stated that the present Government firmly desired a "rapprochement" but that many difficulties stood in the way. He asked me, and this I opine was the real reason for his visit, whether there would be any chance of His Majesty's Government using their influence should it be necessary for the accomplishment of this object, as he believed that Great Britain's influence with Greece was superior to that of any other nation.

I replied that, should the occasion arise, I would mention the matter to you, but that as negotiations between the two countries have not yet been commenced, the request appeared to be somewhat premature.

M. Daneff then referred to his coming Mission to Livadia,⁽²⁾ and he stated, in general terms, that he and M. Gueshoff would do their utmost to maintain good relations with Turkey. He had hoped that a Railway Convention would shortly be signed between the two countries linking up the frontier stations of Kustendil and Kumanovo.

On the following day at a reception given by the Turkish Minister in commemoration of the Sultan's birthday M. Gueshoff spoke to me to the effect that M. Daneff had called on me by private arrangement with him as they were both anxious that I should make you acquainted with the project of the forthcoming "pourparlers" between Bulgaria and Greece. M. Gueshoff told me, very confidentially, that he had had a certain amount of trouble in persuading M. Daneff to use his influence to eliminate articles from the Zankovist press which were unfavourable to Turkey, but that now he was satisfied that the President of the Sobranjé was working in entire accord with him.

M. Gueshoff added that the recent lack of success by the Italians in the Dardanelles had exercised a calming effect throughout Bulgaria.

A copy of this despatch will be sent to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople by the next messenger.

I have, &c.

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

(²) [*v. infra*, p. 569, No. 571, and pp. 572-3, No. 577.]

No. 569.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Arthur,

St. Petersburg, May 16, 1912.

Many thanks for your letter of the 8th instant.⁽²⁾ I answer it rather hurriedly as I saw both Kokovtsoff and Sazonow this afternoon and have not much time before the Messenger goes.

I had not much trouble in getting from Sazonow some information as to the first of the two matters to which your letter refers. He made it perfectly clear that Russia had been the author and promoter of the secret arrangement between Bulgaria and Servia. He told me that the chief difficulty which at first stood in the way of

(¹) [Carnock MSS., Vol. III of 1912.]

(²) [Not reproduced, as it cannot be traced.]

this arrangement was Bulgaria's refusal to recognise Serbia's claims to Uskub. Bulgaria eventually not only recognised these claims, but also gave in to Serbia's claims to a corner of lake Ochrida, so that the line of "future demarcation" which had been agreed upon⁽³⁾ ran through Lake Okhrida. Once this difficulty was got over the way to the signature of the Treaty was smooth. The matter had been arranged not in St. Petersburg but by Nekludow in pourparlers with Danieff, and as regards Serbia by the aid of Spalaikovitch. I reminded him that his original idea when he told me of his intentions in 1910 was to bring in Greece (and also Montenegro). He said he would tell me in profound secrecy that Greece had now been brought in—that is to say she had entered into a secret understanding with Bulgaria, but she was not aware of Bulgaria's Treaty with Serbia.

He asked me what Sir E. Grey and you thought of what had been done. Did you consider the arrangement too aggressive? I said that the danger which you apprehended was that Austria might get wind of the Treaty and resent it. He admitted that there was such danger, but said that nothing worth doing could be done without some element of risk. He was not at all afraid of King Ferdinand giving away the secret to Austria. There was more danger of the Servians letting it leak out, but Hartwig had reported that the Treaty was known only to a few persons in Serbia. Sazonow said that Austria had no suspicions as yet. He mentioned that at his suggestion Austria's name was kept out of the Treaty. . . .⁽⁴⁾

Yours very sincerely,

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

⁽³⁾ [Marginal comment by Mr. O'Beirne: "This would be pleasant reading for the Turks. H. O'B."]

⁽⁴⁾ [The concluding paragraphs of this letter refer to the Persian loan and other subjects not connected with the present volume]

No. 570.

Sir A. Nicolson to Mr. O'Beirne.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear O'Beirne,

Foreign Office, May 21, 1912.

Many thanks for your letter of the 16th instant.⁽²⁾

You certainly have given me most interesting and important news with respect to Bulgaria and Serbia, and it shows me that the arrangement which has recently been concluded is of a more serious and far-reaching character than we originally supposed, and it is evident that the distribution of the spoils in Macedonia has been decided upon.

I am a little afraid that Sazonoff is embarking upon rather an adventurous policy, though I do not imagine that he or any of his colleagues, or, indeed, the Emperor, has the remotest wish or desire to provoke conflicts. I think the line which he is now adopting in Near Eastern affairs is a little risky and might possibly eventually lead to serious trouble. However, I do not wish you to indicate to him any of my apprehensions, as at the present moment it is exceedingly necessary for us to keep on the best possible terms with Russia and not to have the appearance of criticising any action which they may think desirable to take, and which I presume they consider to be to their own interests. . . .⁽³⁾

[Yours, &c.

A. NICOLSON.]

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. III of 1912]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document]

⁽³⁾ [The concluding paragraphs of this letter refer to the secret agreement between Greece and Bulgaria, the Persian loan and the recall of M. Lous from St. Petersburg.]

No. 571.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 22516/18926/12/7.

(No. 46.)

Sir,

Sofia, D. May 23, 1912.

R. May 28, 1912.

With reference to my despatch No. 43 of the 9th instant⁽²⁾ I have the honour to report that I asked M. Guéchoff a few days ago whether he could tell me anything of the result of M. Daneff's mission to Livadia, the importance of which had been enhanced by the presence of the Russian Premier, Minister of Foreign Affairs and War Minister. His Excellency replied that the reception accorded to the Mission by the Emperor and the Russian Statesmen had been most friendly and that the chief advice tendered to them could be resumed in the words "be quiet, very quiet." M. Guéchoff went on that it was unnecessary for him to add that only serious complications would make them depart from their present peaceful attitude.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. Mr. Barclay reported that M. Daneff and his mission left Sofia on May 4, for Livadia. (F.O. 20156/18926/12/7.)]

No. 572.

*Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir A. Nicolson.*Confidential.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

6, Marble Arch, W., June 1, 1912.

I enclose herewith, a short Memo[ran]dum of my convers[atio]n with King Ferdinand in accordance with your wishes. . . .⁽²⁾

Yours,

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

Enclosure in No. 572.

Memorandum.

Confidential.

Prior to my departure on leave, the King of Bulgaria requested me to come and see him at the Palace.

His Majesty stated that, after long and anxious consideration of the general political situation, he had come to the conclusion that the present policy of Treaties and Ententes between Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece, was the only safe one to adopt in view of the general distrust which existed as to the future policy of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand.

The King then alluded to the Secret Treaty, as he said he knew that I was aware of it. I would, he stated be able to appreciate from one of the Articles of the Treaty (H[is] M[ajesty] evidently referred to Art[icle] III) that both he and his Government were well disposed towards Turkey. The Treaty had, as its object, the curbing of Austrian pretensions:—supported as the Balkan States would be by Russia, he did not believe that Austria would now dare to occupy the Sanjak. H[is] M[ajesty] had, he considered, saved Serbia and he trusted that the Servian Gov[ernment] would

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. V of 1912.]

⁽²⁾ [The concluding paragraphs of the letter discuss the probable reactions of Austria-Hungary and other Powers when the Secret Treaty should be made public.]

show their gratitude. He would continue to do his utmost to preserve the peace but, should Italy be successful, i.e. be able to inflict a serious loss on Turkey anywhere in Europe, it would be difficult to restrain the Bulgarian Army. He would, however, never act in opposition to Russia, the more so as his Gov[ernmen]t were now absolutely convinced that that country did not covet any Bulgarian territory.

If they had to fight either against Austria or Turkey, Bulgaria and Servia w[oul]d now march as one country: he hoped shortly to come to an arrangement with Greece: negotiations had just commenced between the two Powers and were "en bon train": he had approved the Servian proposals as regards the Military Convention.

King Ferdinand expressed himself as most anxious that the knowledge of the existence of the Treaty should be kept from Austria as long as the present Emperor lived, but he scarcely expected that this would be possible. It must, however, in no case be divulged prior to his official visits to Vienna and Berlin.

H[is] M[ajesty] concluded the political portion of his conversation by stating that he felt sure that both France and Great Britain would assist Russia in her Balkan policy should the necessity arise.

H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

June 1, 1912.

No. 573.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, June 5, 1912.

F.O. 24062/6816/12/7.

D. 8.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 52.)

R. 10.50 P.M.

Bulgaria.

Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs told me to-day that he had long conversation with the King of Bulgaria when His Majesty was here a few days ago, and that he is quite satisfied with his present attitude and with assurances that he has given of his peaceful intentions.

His Excellency showed no anxiety as to the reported rapprochement between Servia and Bulgaria, and as to the projected customs union between the two countries, he declared that it could not be carried out for at least five years, until commercial treaties with Austria-Hungary expired.

MINUTE.

It might be better not to repeat this telegram.

R. P. M.
L. M.
E. G.

No. 574.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 24583/24583/12/7.

(No. 58.) Confidential.

Sofia, D. June 6, 1912.

Sir,

R. June 10, 1912.

Bulgaria and Servia have never appeared to be on such friendly terms as at this present moment. Many recent events tend to justify this statement.

Within the past six weeks, and at three different intervals, Servian students of both sexes have made tours through Bulgaria, being officially received at the places

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this despatch were sent to Belgrade and St. Petersburg. A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

they visited by the Local Authorities, and the troupe of the Servian National Theatre has given performances at Sofia, which King Ferdinand attended. On the other hand Mr. Bobtcheff, the Bulgarian Minister of Public Instruction, proceeded to Belgrade to assist at the opening of the Southern Slav Artistic Exhibition, and was received there with marked cordiality, King Peter bestowing a high Order upon him. This Visit was almost immediately succeeded by the second conference of the Committee formed for the Serbo-Bulgarian economic rapprochement,⁽²⁾ which was attended by numerous Bulgarian delegates and opportunity was taken for friendly speeches from both sides.

Although of apparent minor importance, one cannot help feeling that the above incidents are worthy of mention on account of the underlying motives which have prompted them.

The rumour that was spread recently by the Austrian and French Press as to the conclusion of an alliance between Bulgaria and Servia, gained absolutely no credence here whatsoever. It may be significant, however, to mention that the lengthy denial published in the semi-official organ of the Servian Government was, I learn on good authority, written in Belgrade by the hand of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In this connection the *Vetcherna Posta* publishes an interview with Mr. Milovanovitch who is therein stated to have declared that the Serbo-Bulgarian relations are daily improving, that the two sister nations should always live on good terms, work together for their common welfare and be prepared in case of need to lend each other mutual assistance.

There is no doubt that recent advances have, as they have always done in the past, come from Servia while Bulgaria has been apparently more inclined to caution. This is all the more understandable when one realises the geographical position of the two countries. It is at first sight but natural that Bulgaria should prefer not to link her fortunes with those of a neighbour who is absolutely at the mercy of Austria and stands in that Power's path to Salonica. But on more careful consideration Bulgaria may well realise the danger to herself should she remain with her arms folded in case of an Austrian advance southwards. Bulgaria has hitherto always considered Servia as a negligible quantity with whom an arrangement would be worthless but there are now ominous signs that currents are at work that may eventually turn the tide of her opinion. The refrain of a rapprochement between the Balkan States which has been repeated in different strains by Russia for the past two or three years may perhaps at last be finding an echo. It is quite possible, and even probable, that an evolution is taking place, the results of which may not be without their importance.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

(²) [*cp. supra*, pp. 514-6, Nos. 526-7.]

No. 575.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne

F.O. 25242/24202/12/38.

(No. 204.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 10, 1912.

Count Benckendorff told me to-day that he ought to have informed me before of the proposed meeting between the Emperor of Russia and the German Emperor at the end of this month (Russian style).

M. Sazonoff had charged him to add: "bien entendu que cette entrevue ne peut porter nulle atteinte aux rapports cordiaux établis entre l'Angleterre et nous depuis plusieurs années."

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 26627/26457/12/44.

(No. 513.)

Constantinople, D. June 17, 1912.

Sir,

R. June 24, 1912.

The question of Turkey's position with regard to the grouping of the European Powers, which has at intervals been discussed since the outbreak of the war in press and Parliament without any definite conclusion being arrived at, has been again brought into prominence by Hussein Djahid, who, in an article in the *Tanin* of the 15th instant treats it with unusual frankness and candour.

As the writer somewhat brutally remarks, it is all very well for Turks to discuss whether they would prefer an alliance with England or Germany: but they do not seem to realise that there is another important aspect of the question, which is that, it is first essential that England or Germany, or any other Power should have expressed some wish to be allied with Turkey: which none of the Powers have as yet done. So far as the present war is concerned, Hussein Djahid points out that Germany and Austria-Hungary, being Italy's allies, cannot desert that alliance in order to make friends with Turkey and turn Italy out of Tripoli. England and France too have promised to allow Italy a free hand in the provinces, and can therefore be of no use to this country in restoring her property to her.

The fact is, generally speaking, that neither the Triple Alliance nor the Triple Entente are anxious for Turkey's inclusion on equal terms in their society: and Turkey for her part could never accept to place herself under a moral protectorate of any Power or group of Powers.

Her only course is then, not to seek hasty alliances but to set about carrying out the reforms required to bring about the renovation of the whole country. When, some years hence, this has been accomplished, she may turn her mind to the conclusion of an honourable alliance. Meanwhile, "our only ally must be our intelligence, our zeal, our readiness to make every sacrifice, and to stifle for the country's good, every harmful sentiment of amour-propre."

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

Mr. Barclay to Sir Eduard Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 26739/26739/12/7.

(No. 58.) Very Confidential.

Sofia, D. June 18, 1912.

Sir,

R. June 24, 1912.

M. Daneff has just returned from his special Mission to Livadia⁽²⁾ and subsequent visits to Moscow and St. Petersburg where he had the occasion to meet a number of leading political men in Russia. Knowing that the Servian Minister was on intimate terms with M. Daneff and that he had seen him yesterday, I took an opportunity of asking M. Spalaikovitch this morning what impressions His Excellency had brought back from his visit to Russia.

It appears that M. Daneff said that he had found great determination on the part of all political men with whom he had come into contact to work for the settlement of the Balkan Question. He had gathered that Russia was better prepared now

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 566-7, No. 568, and *note* (2); p. 569, No. 571.]

than ever before, though there was still room for improvement, but that she realised that the moment was not propitious for any definite action. It was not due, however, to inadequateness of military preparations that Russia held back, but to the yet incomplete formation of the European constellation such as she desired it to be. M. Daneff said that from the Russian standpoint England was far too preoccupied in keeping on good terms with the Turks with a view to gaining the pre-eminence in Constantinople; France had too many financial interests at stake in Turkey to desire the disturbance of the *status quo*; Italy was too unreliable and, they feared, undetachable from the Triple Alliance; with Germany it remained to be ascertained whether she would always be prepared to support Austria as she had done in 1908; as to Austria, Russia felt that any attempt at coming to terms with her would be hopeless.

It would seem from M. Daneff's statements that the sole aim of Russia is directed at present to bringing about a state of affairs which will enable her to impose her will, when she is of opinion that the time has come to put to Europe the question of the solution of the Balkan Problem.

With this object in view, M. Spalaikovitch said, Russia had already successfully induced Bulgaria and Serbia into contracting an alliance,—to be joined ultimately by Greece and Montenegro,—as a barrier to an Austrian advance. It would only be required for Russia to persuade Great Britain and France to share her views as to the desirability of driving the Turks out of Europe, leaving them Constantinople. To my remarking that I failed to grasp what advantages Russia and especially England and France would reap from such a policy, which would probably cause a European war and spell ruin to the vast interests that both the latter Powers have at stake in the Ottoman Dominions, M. Spalaikovitch replied that it would only mean a change of names on the map and that those interests would subsequently benefit thereby. Besides, he went on, victory would mean the crushing of Germany, the recovery of Alsace Lorraine to France, the saving of millions a-year in shipbuilding to Great Britain, in fact, the beginning of an era of peace to Europe! But, M. Spalaikovitch added, a European war was not a necessity; Russia's real desire was to "keep the ring" for the Balkan States to fight out their own battle with Turkey without any interference from outside, and her aim was directed to being in a position to achieve the object with the support of the Western Powers. Much also would depend on the extent of Germany's support of Austria, which Russia seemed to believe would not be unlimited. Russia was daily increasing her armaments; not from fear of aggression, for she knew she would not be attacked, but with a view to pursuing an active policy.

Of course, I am not in a position to judge how far the above views affect Russia's policy in the Near East. But I am reporting this conversation as indicative of the strong sentiments which animate these small States to the extent of deluding them into believing that the Great Powers would deliberately run the risk of a general conflagration merely to bring about the realisation of Balkan aspirations.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

MINUTE.

Balkan statesmen are rarely able to see anything except the Balkans.

R. G. V.
June 24.
L. M.
A. N.
F. G.

St E Goschen to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 27693/24202/12/38.

(No. 308.)

Sir,

Berlin, D. June 24, 1912.

R. July 1, 1912.

The Berlin Press continues to emphasize the importance of the forthcoming meeting between the German Emperor and the Czar. Usually on the occasion of such meetings, particularly when the Sovereigns concerned are not allies, pains are taken to show that they are so to speak of a platonic nature, and that the friends and allies of the visited country need be under no apprehensions of any fresh political departure. In the present case this line is not taken and the frankest hopes are expressed that the meeting will result in a closer understanding between Germany and Russia, and equally frank anticipations made that the proceedings will cause great annoyance in England and render the relations between her and Germany still more strained.

The "Hamburger Nachrichten" puts this view very strongly. It says that one thing is certain, namely—that neither Germany nor Great Britain can of their own accord give up their naval plans. There might be sometimes a temporary improvement of relations and a partial arrangement of differences, but of a complete settlement of them there could be no question. One might deplore this state of things and sincerely wish for an understanding with England, but at the same time one had to take a practical view of the situation and bear it in mind, if one did not wish to be exposed to continual disappointment. Under these circumstances the cleverest of German Ambassadors in London could do no more than endeavour to avoid anything that might possibly lead to an accentuation of the differences between the two countries. It seemed, however, very unlikely that Herr von Marschall would find it easy to do much in that direction, for the reason that, unless appearances were deceitful, there seemed every probability that fresh political differences between the two countries would occur in the near future. The paper added: "The ground of this probability lies in the further strengthening of the relations between Germany and Russia, which we believe and hope, is now in the process of being arranged. The meeting of the Emperors in Finnish waters will probably have the same effect on British public opinion, and not on public opinion alone, as the Potsdam conversations of three years ago. It is the old story: no sooner do Germany and Russia make the slightest sign of coming nearer to each other than Great Britain is at once roused to indignation and fury. That is comprehensible enough. She has the strongest interest in the relations between Germany and Russia being as frosty as possible. Only under such circumstances has she the necessary elbow room for the realization of her political designs in Europe, while, on the contrary, she finds her hands tied when the two nations are on confidential and intimate terms. If, then, as seems highly probable, the meeting between the two Emperors results in an increase of ill-feeling between Germany and England, Herr von Marschall will have an excellent opportunity, better perhaps than may be agreeable to him, of showing his capability as a diplomat."

These are of course only Press views, and the Acting Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, speaking of them to me to-day, said that it was ridiculous to attach so much importance to the meeting and to think that the two Emperors were going to discuss and arrange fresh political departures such as might give umbrage to Russia's allies and friends. He added that he presumed the papers were writing all this nonsense because they were tired of the Turco-Italian war, had said all they had had to say, which was far too much, about Herr von Marschall's appointment

(1) [Copies of this despatch were sent to St. Petersburg and to the Director of Military Operations]

and programme, and because the only thing left for them to write about was the Emperor's visit to the Czar. During the visit he supposed that the two Emperors and their Ministers would talk about the war and the possibilities of its being brought to a conclusion; but he was certain that they would not endeavour to arrange any joint action for mediation, because it was the view of the Imperial Government that in all questions connected with the war the Great Powers should make a point of standing together.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

MINUTE

The Berlin Press usually acts under inspiration and, though there can be little doubt that the hopes it expresses are felt in official circles, it is unlikely in this instance that it is inspired.

L M.
A N.
E. G

No. 579.

Mr. O'Brien to Sir Edward Grey (1)

F.O. 27673/27673/12/38.

(No. 198.) Very Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. June 24, 1912.

Sir,

R. July 1, 1912.

As I have had the honour to report to you by my despatch No. 191 of yesterday's date,(2) the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs has more than once complained, in conversations which I have had with him lately, of the attitude of suspicion and mistrust taken up by the French Government with regard to the policy pursued by Russia in connection with the Turco-Italian war, and more particularly with regard to what may pass between Russia and Germany during the approaching meeting of the two Emperors. For this attitude on the part of the French Government Monsieur Sazonow throws the responsibility largely on the shoulders of Monsieur Georges Louis, whose presence here as French Ambassador does not, Monsieur Sazonow thinks, contribute to smooth relations between Russia and her ally.

I may mention, as the result of many conversations which I have had with Monsieur Louis, that I think Monsieur Sazonow makes a mistake in attributing chiefly to his influence the lack of confidence in Russia's intentions displayed by the French Government. Monsieur Louis tells me that he is not at all apprehensive of anything happening at the forthcoming Imperial meeting which could affect the relations now established between Russia, France and Great Britain. He quite admits the truth of the remark made to me by Monsieur Sazonow that, as regards Russia's general policy, no change resulted from former meetings between the Emperors. It is true that at Potsdam Monsieur Sazonow assented to certain stipulations regarding the Bagdad railway scheme and kindred matters to which legitimate objection could be taken by France and England; but Russia's general policy after Potsdam remained exactly what it was before, and so far as an impression to the contrary gained ground at one time this was due in Monsieur Louis' opinion to the adroit way in which the German press was manœuvred. In general Monsieur Louis realizes (and I think it is difficult to do otherwise if one has had some personal intercourse with Monsieur Sazonow) that the latter's policy is at present essentially antagonistic to the

(1) [Copies of this despatch were sent to Paris; to Berlin; to Vienna; in print, and a copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

(2) [Not reproduced. It reported conversations with M Sazonov. of which the tenour is sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 27671/4/12/44.)]

combination of the two Central Powers; and that to suspect him of any inclination to come to private arrangements with Germany which would tend to draw Russia apart from England and France would be entirely to misunderstand his views and intentions. I think therefore that the apprehensions which seem lately to have disturbed the minds of the French Government have their origin rather at the Quai d'Orsay than at the French Embassy here.

I have spoken in this sense to Monsieur Sazonow, as it seems regrettable that he should labour under a false impression as to the part played by Monsieur Louis in the difference of opinion that has arisen between the Paris and St. Petersburg Cabinets. He replied that if I was right that only showed that the French Ambassador had no influence with his own Government.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

MINUTES

Approve language.

H. N.

Approve. The vital importance of the Alliance to France accounts for her anxiety but this does not diminish the imprudence of showing suspicion. M. Paléologue is doubtless to blame.

L. M.
A. N.
E. G.

No. 580.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 27677/27677/12/89.

(No. 197.)

St. Petersburg, D. June 27, 1912.

Sir,

R. July 1, 1912.

I have the honour to report that yesterday's edition of the "Novoe Vremya" published an interview with Monsieur Pashich, former President of the Servian Council of Ministers and now on a visit to St. Petersburg.

According to Monsieur Pashich the situation in Albania was causing considerable anxiety to the Servian Government. There were many Serbs who sympathized with and were desirous of assisting the Albanians and this public feeling could not be entirely disregarded by his Government. Moreover the Albanian rising also affected Macedonia and though the revolutionary bands there were quiet at present it was clear that they were only waiting to take advantage of a favourable opportunity. Monsieur Pashich declared that the present relations between Servia and Turkey were excellent and that the former was doing all it could to live on friendly terms with Turkey, a fact which the Ottoman Government recognized. The state of affairs in Albania however compelled Servia to keep a vigilant watch on her Turkish frontier. Monsieur Pashich spoke of the great change which had come over Serbo-Bulgarian relations. He considered it difficult to speak of an alliance between the two countries but saw no reason why such an alliance should not eventually take place and might even lead to a federation of the Balkan States.

In regard to Austria, Monsieur Pashich declared that the construction by that Power of fortifications on the frontier was causing uneasiness in Servia. It was not easy to see against whom they were being constructed. Relations between the two

(1) [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

countries were entirely correct but at the same time if Austria continued to erect these fortifications it would be necessary for the Servian Government to take measures to safeguard her Austrian frontier.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

MINUTE.

A federation of the Balkan States *including* Turkey would be a guarantee of peace, but a previous condition must be the reform of the Macedonian province and of Albania. British advisers may be able to improve matters.

L. M.

A. N.

No. 581.

Mr O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 27681/27681/12/38.

(No. 201.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. June 27, 1912.

R. July 1, 1912.

I have the honour to state that I enquired yesterday of the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs what Monsieur Pashich had told him with regard to the prospect of a Customs Union between Servia and Bulgaria. Monsieur Sazonow replied that the two Governments had decided that the projected union could not be brought about at one stroke but that it would be necessary gradually to bring the two customs tariffs into harmony by introducing the necessary changes into the Customs Laws of the two countries. The process would probably take one or two years.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Board of Trade.]

No. 582.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Arthur Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Arthur,

St. Petersburg, June 27, 1912.

I was much obliged for the information which you gave me in your private letter of the 18th instant.⁽²⁾

Sazonow has been greatly put out during the last few days by Poincaré's proposals for a Declaration of Principle by the three Powers regarding mediation, and by the suspicions of Russia which dictated these proposals, and in his irritation he has spoken to me with great openness about Russia's policy. His main objection to Poincaré's suggested declaration of disinterestedness was of course with reference to the impression which it would produce on the Balkan Slavs. He told me, what I had naturally surmised, that the Bulgarian and Servian delegations which had just visited Russia ostensibly on the occasion of the Moscow celebrations had in reality come in connexion with the Serbo-Bulgarian secret Treaty. He explained that the delegations had come to "present" the signed Treaty to the Emperor. Russia thus appears as a sort of high protecting Power in the alliance concluded between the two Slav kingdoms, and the Emperor gives his formal sanction to the secret arrangement which contemplates in certain eventualities the partition of Macedonia.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. V of 1912.]

⁽²⁾ [This letter discussed the French proposal for mediation in regard to the war in Tripoli. (Carnock MSS., Vol. V of 1912.)]

That Sazonow attaches real importance to this arrangement, and that in fact he means business by it, is shown by the way in which he took the proposal to sign a "Pacte de désintéressement."⁽³⁾ He said that coming immediately after the arrival of the Slav delegations it would be regarded as a renunciation by Russia of her historic rôle in the Balkans, that it would have a disastrous effect, and that it would undo at a stroke the work accomplished by Russian policy during the last two years. He regarded the suggestion as positively dangerous, and described it as "playing with fire"—by which I take him to mean that it is a dangerous thing to force Russia to show her hand about the Balkans, because she might have to make a declaration which would have far-reaching consequences.

Sazonow saw very quickly that the French Government were actuated by fear as to what might pass at the forthcoming Imperial meeting, and this he strongly resented. He says that nothing he can say or do can dispel French mistrust; that Poincaré does not believe a word Iswolsky tells him, and that Louis will not believe him, Sazonow, when he declares that he has no intention of using Turkey's difficulties to obtain advantages for Russia with regard to the Straits or anything else, and that he does not dream of coming to any separate arrangement with the Germans about mediation. For French incredulity he throws the blame largely on Louis. He says that Louis cannot see what the real position of affairs between Russia and Germany is. Speaking of the new Navy Bill, he remarked to me that the French Ambassador could not even realise that this was a measure aimed directly against Germany.

As regards Louis I know that Sazonow makes a complete mistake. In conversations which I have had with him Louis said that he saw no cause whatever for uneasiness as to the meeting of the Emperors. He sees quite well that previous meetings, not excluding Potsdam, left Russia's general foreign policy exactly where it stood before. The fact is that anyone who has had some intercourse with Sazonow can see that at the present time his policy is essentially anti-German, and that to suspect him of any inclination to coquet with Germany is to misunderstand him in a ludicrous way. So long as we do not show signs of drawing away from Russia, I think we need have no anxiety about Sazonow. At the same time it is certain that Russia is being constantly plied by Germany with the most alluring proposals. Sazonow said to me the other day "If you only knew what they proposed to us." I assume that anything which they can propose to Russia in the Near East would probably mean Russia throwing over Servia, and therefore Sazonow's Serbo-Bulgarian arrangements (whatever may be thought of them otherwise) constitute an additional guarantee that he will remain faithful to England and France. . . .⁽⁴⁾

Yours very sincerely,
HUGH O'BEIRNE.

⁽³⁾ [cp. *supra*, pp. 404-5, No. 419, and *min.*; pp. 407-8, Nos. 422-4]

⁽⁴⁾ [The rest of the letter refers to the recall of M. Louis and Anglo-Russian relations. For the question of the recall of M. Louis, v. *Les Carnets de Georges Louis* (Paris 1926), E. Judet *Georges Louis*, and R. Poincaré *Au Service de la France* (Paris 1926), II.]

No. 583.

Mr O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 29840/24202/12/38.

(No. 207.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. July 5, 1912.

R. July 15, 1912.

I notice that the Berlin "Kreuzzeitung," commenting on the approaching meeting of the two Emperors at Baltic Port, remarks that the efforts of the German Government to give to the ties of friendship connecting Russia and Germany "a more

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations]

stable form and more definite outlines." will be received with sympathy and joyful good wishes by the overwhelming majority of enlightened German people. It may perhaps be worth while to point out that if in truth there exists in Germany any general desire for a definite political agreement with this country, the wish is certainly not reciprocated by Russian public opinion.

So far as public opinion here finds expression in the press, a glance through the St. Petersburg and Moscow papers on the eve of the Imperial meeting is conclusive as to the feelings aroused by the suggestion of a rapprochement with Germany. All the important organs of opinion, Conservative, Nationalist, Octobrist and Liberal, emphasise the fact that such meetings as that about to take place are a necessity in the case of two neighbouring Powers on terms of friendship, and give expression more or less openly to the hope that nothing may occur which could even give the appearance that Russia is drawing closer to Germany at the expense of her existing arrangements with England and France. In some cases the fact is recalled that after the Potsdam meeting the German press was so handled as to convey an exaggerated impression of what had taken place, and the Russian public is set on its guard against similar manœuvres on the present occasion. For leading articles expressing a different view one would have to go to one or two totally discredited sheets, which represent the opinion only of the most extravagant reactionaries and Nationalists. In fact it may almost be said that at the present moment there is not a reputable newspaper in Russia, and there are not more than one or two individual writers of note, who advocate the policy of a German rapprochement.

Turning from the utterances of the press to what one may gather from other sources as to the tendencies of educated Russian opinion on questions of foreign policy, it must be said that there undoubtedly exists in political circles here a good deal of dissatisfaction with the working of the Anglo-Russian understanding in Persia. It is said that Russia made a mistake when, yielding to English pressure, she threw overboard the ex-Shah Mohammed Ali. The constitutional régime favoured by England is seen to have proved a failure. The existing anarchy is thought, somewhat unreasonably, to be more detrimental to Russian than to British interests. Russian prestige is believed to have suffered, and the Russian Minister at Teheran is reproached with taking his orders from His Majesty's Legation.

No doubt it was inevitable that the attempt of the two Powers to work together in the solution of so hopeless a problem as the Persian question should lead occasionally to results which could not be equally pleasing to both sides. Nor is it at all surprising that the restraint frequently imposed on Russian policy in Persia by British influence should provoke some irritation and impatience here, more particularly among Russians of what may be called the forward school in foreign politics. But allowing that there is a good deal of grumbling in certain Russian quarters with regard to the fruits produced so far by the Anglo-Russian Agreement in Persia, I think it cannot be questioned that the Entente has on the whole, as time goes on, tended steadily to grow in popularity and strength. It would be difficult for anyone who witnessed the reception accorded to the British Delegation last winter to form a different opinion.

The partisans of a closer understanding with Germany are, needless to say, to be found chiefly in Court and military circles and among the higher class of officials. One is constantly told of some functionary at Court who is described as an influential supporter of the German policy. One thing may I think be said with certainty of such personages:—that they have not the influence to impress whatever views they may hold on the Emperor; and I should further be inclined to doubt whether their views except on very rare occasions even reach His Majesty's ears. A Russian who is very well qualified to speak on this subject remarked to me the other day that people about the Court have the utmost difficulty in speaking to the Emperor about questions touching their own personal interests. How, he said, do you suppose that they would try to talk to His Majesty about foreign affairs? I believe that this is to a great extent the truth of the matter. The Emperor inspires his subjects, not

excluding some members of the Imperial Family, with an amount of awe which is not easily realised out of Russia. Except for Cabinet Ministers who go to make their periodical "reports," or for persons who have been accorded a special audience, it is a difficult matter to have any conversation with His Majesty on business matters. Under these circumstances few people would be likely to use whatever opportunities they may have of speaking to the Emperor in order to press upon him views different from those which he is known to hold.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

MINUTES.

This despatch is not only interesting but encouraging.

The most eminent publicist at this moment who is in favour of a Russo-German rapprochement is M. Menshikoff whose recent article on the subject in the *Novoye Vremya* encouraged the enemies of the Anglo-Russian understanding in this country

H. N.

July 17, 1912

R. P. M.

M. Menshikoff is well known and not much regarded as an erratic campaigner, and I so entirely agree with what Mr. O'Beirne writes as to the supposed "Court influence"—such "influence" is a myth

A. N.

E. G.

[*ED. NOTE.*—The meeting between the German Emperor and the Czar took place at Baltic Port, where the German Emperor arrived in his yacht "Hohenzollern" on July 4. He left for Swinemunde on the afternoon of July 6. A summary of the accounts of the visit published in the Press was given by Lord Granville in his despatch No. 328 of July 8, 1912. The comments in the German Press were universally friendly. Lord Granville also gives a translation of the official *communiqué* in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of July 7, 1912. (F.O. 29240/24202/12/38.) M. Sazonov's report is printed in *Livre Noir*, Vol. II, pp. 335-8 *v. also G.P XXXI*, chapter 247.]

No. 584.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 29844/24202/12/38.

(No. 212.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. July 8, 1912.

R. July 15, 1912.

I have the honour to state that the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs returned from the meeting of the two Emperors at Baltic Port yesterday morning, and received me the same afternoon in order to give me an account of what had passed.

His Excellency began our conversation by saying that I should be disappointed, because he had nothing to tell me. Everybody had been very kind and nice but nothing particular had taken place. He had had a long conversation with the German Emperor, who had treated him with marked distinction. The only subject of political interest to the two countries on which His Majesty had touched was, however, the situation in China. The Emperor had said that Germany possessed immense commercial interests in China and that it was important to her that the Chinese Empire

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

should not be allowed to disaggregate. Monsieur Sazonow had replied that he feared Russia's interests in China were totally dissimilar from those of Germany. Russia's interests were mainly political. They turned on the fact that she and China were continuous over an immense length of frontier, and it was not to her interest that China should become a strong military Power.—The Emperor William had also warmly thanked Monsieur Sazonow for the conciliatory attitude taken up by Russia during the recent Franco-German Morocco crisis,⁽²⁾ which His Majesty said had contributed largely to prevent the outbreak of war.

The German Chancellor had at the outset of his conversations with Monsieur Sazonow declared that the Germans had not come to the meeting with the intention of asking Russia to do anything whatever.⁽³⁾ They had come with the desire to satisfy themselves, and to *constater* if possible officially, that there had been no change in the relations of friendship which had been established between the two countries at the meeting of the Emperors at Potsdam. If there had even been an improvement in their relations, this would be still more gratifying to Germany.

I asked His Excellency whether there had been any suggestion from the German side touching the question of the present grouping of the Powers. Monsieur Sazonow replied in the negative, and said that on the contrary the Chancellor had declared that he had no wish to "put his finger into the existing constellation."

I asked whether nothing had been said by Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg about the Bagdad Railway question, or the pending negotiations between His Majesty's Government and Turkey. His Excellency replied that the Chancellor had never alluded to the Bagdad Railway, and he himself had therefore kept away from the subject. He had however spoken of the unfriendly action of the Turks in encroaching on Persian territory, and the Chancellor had not disputed what he said.

Touching on the Near Eastern question Monsieur Sazonow told me that he had enquired of the Chancellor whether the assurances that had been given to him at Potsdam, to the effect that Germany would neither support nor encourage Austria-Hungary in any designs of aggrandisement in the Balkans, still held good to-day. The Chancellor had replied emphatically in the affirmative, saying that in that matter Germany now stood exactly where she did then.

As for the mediation question, Monsieur Sazonow told me that he had convinced himself of what he had previously strongly suspected, that Germany was engaged in some separate negotiations on her own account with Italy and Turkey with the object of bringing them to terms. He said that the Chancellor had remarked that there was "still a hope" that the belligerents might agree among themselves; and, although this observation of the Chancellor might in itself (as it seems to me) mean little, Monsieur Sazonow insisted that he was almost as sure of what he said as if the Germans had admitted it to him. He believed that the German Government had got wind of Monsieur Poincaré's recent proposals, and that they feared that these might lead eventually to the summoning of a Conference in Paris. The Germans were endeavouring to avoid that result by separate negotiations with the belligerents. I asked whether the German Government appeared to have any serious reasons for hoping that Turkey and Italy could agree on conditions of peace, but His Excellency could give me no information on this point.

The question of the Ægean Islands had, Monsieur Sazonow informed me, also been touched upon. He had repeated to Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg the views which (as reported in my telegram No. 237 of the 2nd July)⁽⁴⁾ he had expressed to the Turkish Ambassador as to the necessity that would arise of securing effective guarantees in favour of the Greek inhabitants of the islands if the Italian occupation should be prolonged. He had further said to the Chancellor that it would not be possible for Germany to continue to "leave her flute on the table" and disinterest

(2) [The subject of the Agadir crisis is treated in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. VII.]

(3) [For Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg's report v. G.P. XXXI, pp. 436-44.]

(4) [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 28150/4/12/44.)]

herself from the discussion regarding the future of the islands, when the time came for considering the question. The Chancellor seems to have avoided committing himself with regard to Monsieur Sazonow's suggestion.

The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs was evidently not a little impressed and gratified by the extreme friendliness shown by the Germans. He dwelt a good deal on the great affability displayed by the Emperor William, and the very good impression made by the personality of the German Chancellor; and he said more than once that he thought the meeting had produced really good results. I remarked that it was a good thing that the Germans should recognise that they could have the friendliest relations with Russia without endeavouring to disturb Russia's existing arrangements with other Powers, and to this Monsieur Sazonow assented. Referring to the *communiqué* issued at the close of the meeting, I said that its terms were very satisfactory; to which Monsieur Sazonow replied that its wording was much better as he had first drafted it, but he had accepted certain changes in phraseology desired on the German side.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

MINUTE.

There is nothing here which need disturb us.

H. N.

July 17, 1912.

R. P. M

A. N.

No. 585.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 29845/26943/12/44.

(No. 213.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. July 8, 1912.

R. July 15, 1912.

At the interview which I had with the Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday, he allowed me to read, as I had the honour to report by my telegram No. 243 of the 7th July,⁽²⁾ a very alarmist telegram which he had received from the Russian Minister at Sofia. Monsieur Nekludow reported that the progress of the Albanian insurrection and the military conspiracy in Turkey had given rise to a fresh movement in Bulgaria in favour of armed action. He suspected that secret negotiations with a view to an alliance between Bulgaria and Italy were being carried on through the intermediacy of Count Bosdari, and he went so far as to say that the Bulgarian president of the council was prepared for the outbreak of hostilities from one hour to the next.

Monsieur Sazonow rather discounted Monsieur Nekludow's information on the ground of the state of that gentleman's nerves, but in this connexion His Excellency gave me some account of conversations which have recently passed between Bulgaria and Russia, with regard to the designs of the former against Turkey. He said that when Monsieur Daneff (President of the Bulgarian Sobranjé) was in St. Petersburg last April he used very warlike language. He said that Bulgaria had waited a long time to move, with the result that she had lost very favourable opportunities. He had in fact reproached Russia with preventing Bulgaria from attacking Turkey in the spring of 1909.

In parenthesis I should mention that Monsieur Sazonow seemed quite inclined to consider this reproach well founded. He remarked that in the spring of 1909 Bulgaria had an excellent opportunity for attacking Turkey. Russia could easily by moving two Army Corps have paralysed Roumania and so relieved the Bulgarians of

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced, as the substance of the telegram is given above. (F.O. 28706/26943/12/44.)]

anxiety as to their fear. In refraining from this course and in so acting as to avert a war, Russia had rendered Turkey a service for which the latter had shown herself singularly ungrateful.

Monsieur Sazonow had told the Bulgarians last April that they should have patience. They were a young people and the future in the Balkans was evidently theirs. But they should not spoil things by precipitation, and he had pointed out to them that if they took up arms and joined Italy against Turkey they might find Italy making peace and leaving them in the lurch. In any case he had declared that if Bulgaria went to war she should not have the support of Russia.

His Excellency on receiving Monsieur Nekludow's report had again used much the same arguments with the Bulgarian Government. On this occasion he had informed them that from what he had just heard at Baltic Port there seemed reason to think that Turkey and Italy might shortly come to terms, and that Bulgaria would be very ill-advised to select the present moment for taking sides with one of the combatants.

It is evident that Monsieur Sazonow's language to the Bulgarians though it may serve the purpose of restraining them from action for the time being is not calculated to foster pacific dispositions in that people in the long run.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

No. 586.

Lord Granville to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Berlin, July 9, 1912.

F.O. 29230/26943/12/44.

D. 7.25 P.M.

Tel. (No. 69.)

R. 9 P.M.

Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs informs me that he has to-day instructed German Minister at Sophia to use all his influence to keep Bulgaria quiet, and added that Russian Government have sent similar instructions.

MINUTE.

No doubt this was discussed at Baltic port.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to St. Petersburg (as No. 567); to Vienna (as No. 59); to Constantinople (as No. 370), to Sofia (as No. 7).]

No. 587.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 29848/24202/12/38.

(No. 216.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. July 10, 1912.

Sir,

R. July 15, 1912.

The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me on the 7th instant that the Emperor William had in conversation with him at Baltic Port referred to the question of Anglo-German relations. His Majesty had said that England had behaved "disloyally" during the Franco-German Morocco crisis—an allusion no doubt to the British naval measures which were supposed to have been taken with a view to an

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

attack on Germany. However His Majesty said that he had proposed soon afterwards that one of the members of the British Government should visit Berlin and the result had been the mission of Lord Haldane,⁽²⁾ of whom the Emperor spoke in terms of high praise. Of course, said the Emperor, Lord Haldane's mission had led to nothing so far as the limitation of armaments was concerned, because "Germany could not, and England would not" check the pace of construction. But there had nevertheless been a *détente* in the relations between the two countries.

Monsieur Sazonow, no doubt unintentionally, omitted to mention to me that he had also had some conversation regarding Anglo-German relations with Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg; but His Excellency told the French Ambassador that the German Chancellor had remarked that neither Germany nor England could limit her naval armaments in order to please the other Power, and that he had also spoken of a *détente* having taken place. The Chancellor evidently spoke in a more reasonable way than the Emperor, and Monsieur Louis said to me that he gathered that Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg had given Monsieur Sazonow to understand that "les choses s'arrangeaient" between Germany and England.

You will have noticed the rather curious statement made to me by Monsieur Sazonow, as reported in my despatch No. 212 of the 8th instant,⁽³⁾ as to the Emperor William having thanked him with much warmth for Russia's attitude during the Morocco crisis. I asked the French Ambassador whether France for her part had not been perfectly satisfied with the attitude of Russia on that occasion. Monsieur Louis replied that there was a moment last summer when the attitude taken up by the Russian Ambassador in Paris had given the French Government cause for dissatisfaction. Russia appeared to be setting herself up, in a way which was quite inadmissible, as the arbiter of the line of action which France ought to follow in her critical negotiations with Germany. Very likely there had been reports on this subject from the German Ambassador in Paris to his Government, and these had produced a sense of gratification in Berlin to which the German Emperor had given expression in speaking to Monsieur Sazonow. Monsieur Louis was however convinced, and had so reported to the French Government, that Monsieur Isvolsky's proceedings were inspired by his own love of intrigue and his desire to combine the parts of Ambassador and Foreign Minister while Monsieur Sazonow was incapacitated by illness. Monsieur Isvolsky's conduct had given him Monsieur Louis the opportunity of satisfying himself by an audience which he had with the Emperor and by conversations with the Russian military authorities and others that Russia remained absolutely faithful to her engagements to France.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

⁽²⁾ [The subject of the Haldane Mission is treated in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. VII.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 580-2, No. 584.]

No. 588.

Lord Granville to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 29860/24202/12/38.

(No. 335.)

Sir,

Berlin, D. July 11, 1912.

R. July 15, 1912.

With reference to my despatch No. 328 of the 8th instant,⁽²⁾ I have the honour to report that the German newspapers are still full of articles on the subject of the meeting of the two Emperors, but that it is very difficult to find anything in them worth quoting. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* announced, as one of the chief results of

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 580, *Ed. note.*]

the Baltic Port meeting, that it had been decided to arrange for meetings of the two Emperors to take place at regular intervals in the future, and the whole chorus of the German Press has repeated this with jubilation as a great and important piece of news. They seem to forget that, with the exception of a year here and there, it has been the habit of Their Majesties to meet pretty frequently, though not perhaps at regular intervals.

Another report quoted from a Russian paper, which has since been contradicted, but which was given with much gusto in this country, was that the Emperor William had urged the Russian Minister of Marine to place his shipbuilding orders in Germany and had promised him that Germany could supply him with six 'Moltkes' in a comparatively short space of time.

The general impression left upon one after the perusal of a great number of articles is that the German Press are quite delighted at the *fact* of the meeting, that they do not show at least any disappointment at the lack of positive results published, that they are firmly convinced that the meeting has been to a certain extent a rebuff for England and especially France, and that they cherish the fond hope that it is the beginning of such an increase of warmth in the relations between the two countries as will, not immediately but gradually, draw Russia away from her western friends.

I should mention that some of the German papers have handsomely admitted the quiet and sensible attitude of the greater part of the British Press on this occasion.

I asked the Acting Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on Tuesday whether he could tell me anything beyond what had appeared in the communiqué, and he replied, as he has, I hear, to various of my colleagues, in practically the same language as Sir Edward Goschen reported in his despatch No. 808 of the 25th ultimo.⁽³⁾ Without actually saying so, Herr Zimmermann gave me to understand that the anxiety felt in both Germany and Russia with regard to the danger of action on the part of the Balkan States had formed a subject of earnest discussion at Baltic Port. I gathered that the result of these discussions had been eminently satisfactory as showing complete agreement between the two Empires: both were equally anxious to restrain any dangerous movements in those parts, and, as I had the honour to report in my telegram No. 69 of the 9th instant,⁽⁴⁾ both Governments have instructed their representatives at Sofia to use all their influence to keep the Bulgarians quiet. Herr Zimmermann admitted that the jealousy of Russia and Austria-Hungary was a very great danger, but expressed his belief that the latter Power too was anxious for peace and quiet.

I have, &c.

GRANVILLE.

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 574-5, No. 578. The date should be June 24.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 583, No. 586.]

No. 589.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 30120/26943/12/44.

(No. 67.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sofia, D. July 11, 1912.

R. July 16, 1912.

I was surprised by the alarmist tone of the communication sent from here by the Russian Minister, as reported in Mr. O'Beirne's telegram No. 243, very confidential of the 7th instant,⁽²⁾ inasmuch as I had been keeping in close touch with

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [For despatch No. 213, of July 8, which repeats telegram No. 243 of July 7, *v. supra*, pp. 582-3, No. 585.]

all the Foreign Representatives and none of them had shown any apprehension as to war breaking out at the present moment between Bulgaria and Turkey. Even M. Nekludow himself had not seemed particularly uneasy; and the Minister for Foreign Affairs whom I had seen on the 8th instant, although somewhat more preoccupied than the week before as to the course events would take in Turkey, did not consider the situation to be grave.

Yesterday I called upon the French Minister who at once guessed the object of my visit, and read out the telegram which the French Ambassador in St. Petersburg had sent to his Government, and their instructions to himself to give restraining advice to the Bulgarian Government "if the information conveyed by the Russian Minister was exact." As I supposed, M. Panafieu had not heard either of any special military preparations, or of any movement in favour of armed intervention, nor could he understand how his Russian Colleague came to send such alarming news. M. Panafieu had an appointment with him later in the afternoon, so this morning I called again at the French Legation to hear the result of the interview. He gave me in a few words the gist of M. Nekludow's telegram to Russia and suggested my going to call on him myself.

Upon doing so, M. Nekludow immediately proceeded to translate the telegram in question. Although of a disquieting nature, it was not so alarming as we had been led to believe; there was no mention at all of an imminent outbreak of hostilities. M. Nekludow however was unable to specify the nature of the military preparations or of the bellicose movement reported by him. All he could say was that he had heard rumours that there was considerable activity at the Ministry of War, that some officers were accusing the Government of pusillanimity for not availing themselves of the present situation in Turkey for declaring war, that some members of the Cabinet were of the same opinion, and that M. Gueshoff might have his hand forced.

I thought M. Nekludow nervous and detected throughout his conversation a vein of anxiety as to the effect produced by his somewhat unwary telegram. He seemed in fact anxious to eradicate the alarmist impression he had given, and he even begged me to explain to you that the situation was not so grave as his telegram apparently implied.

It is significant to note that M. Nekludow does not intend to carry out the instructions received from his Government, which were to the effect that he should lay particular stress, when talking to M. Gueshoff, upon the fact that, as the Russian Government had good grounds for believing from secret information at their disposal that Italy and Turkey would shortly be coming to terms, Bulgaria would probably find herself alone in confronting Turkey. He says that, as he is always impressing upon all the Bulgarian Ministers the absolute desirability of their maintaining peace,—advice which was very forcibly given to Monsieur Daneff at Livadia—it would be almost an insult to Monsieur Gueshoff to be so unnecessarily insistent. As far as I could gather, Monsieur Nekludow only wished to draw the attention of his Government to a state of affairs which might evolve out of certain eventualities such as the outbreak of civil war in Turkey, when public opinion and military aspirations in this country might force first M. Gueshoff's hand and then King Ferdinand's.

M. Nekludow may also have been influenced by the general attitude of the Press, which has of late expressed some dissatisfaction at the fruitlessness of the pacific policy pursued during the past sixteen months by the present Government. But in these countries the opinion of the Press is not of much account.

To sum up, the whole situation at present would seem to be as follows: there is a certain feeling of discontent among some of the officers of the army at what they consider neglect of opportunities to assert themselves over the Turks, and thus obtain relief for their brethren in Macedonia; the same feeling manifests itself among some of the members of the Cabinet. But this is not a new feeling, it has always been prevalent in a greater or lesser degree in Bulgaria and it cannot therefore be termed a "warlike movement." To allay these sentiments, and as it were as a sop, it is more than likely that M. Gueshoff may later on send a circular to the Powers,

calling once more their attention to the deplorable state of Macedonia and appealing for their assistance. M. Gueshoff will never go to war. Rather than do so he would resign; it therefore seems superfluous to give him now calming advice. Should a feeling of discontent develop in the Cabinet and force M. Gueshoff to resign, then would be the moment for the Powers to make use of all the restraining influence at their command. But even in such an eventuality, it must be remembered that it is not the Cabinet but the King who is the real arbiter of Bulgaria's foreign policy. His Majesty's pacific tendencies are as genuine as they are notorious, and one may be absolutely sure that he will only go to war on three conditions, namely: 1° at the instigation of Russia, 2° on a general uprising in Turkey and consequent massacres in Macedonia, and 3° to save his throne and his skin.

Bulgaria as well as Serbia is firmly convinced that Turkey in Europe is doomed. The old Turkish régime is a thing of the past, the new is proving its incapacity to govern, and the country is going from bad to worse. The policy of these two Slav countries is not to force on events, for undue precipitation would probably bring about results in direct opposition to the object in view. They feel that the Ottoman fruit, although rotten at the core, is not yet ready to fall at the first shaking of the tree. The present policy of Bulgaria and Serbia is therefore to adhere rigorously to the advice so emphatically given by the Emperor of Russia, first to M. Daneff at Livadia⁽³⁾ and later to M. Passhitch at St. Petersburg,⁽⁴⁾ namely not to put themselves in the wrong through any acts of aggression, but to keep very quiet and to wait.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

MINUTE.

M. Nekludow has made a blunder.

R. P. M
H. N.
A. N.
E. G.

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 569, No. 571.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 576-7, Nos. 580-1.]

No. 590.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Arthur Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Arthur,

St. Petersburg, July 11, 1912.

Many thanks for your letter of the 2nd instant.⁽²⁾

I gather from Sir E. Grey's telegram No. 568 of July 8⁽³⁾ that His Majesty's Government were pleased with the account which Sazonow gave us of what passed at Baltic Port.⁽⁴⁾ It shows how very groundless were Poincaré's fears with regard to the meeting. So far from leading to anything in the nature of private arrangements between Germany and Russia, it seems to me to have served to emphasise the fact that any alteration in the present system of relations between the Powers is out of the question at present. And yet it cannot be said that the Germans did not accomplish something by this meeting. Sazonow as I have reported was undoubtedly much impressed and gratified by the friendliness and affability shown him by the German Emperor and Bethmann-Hollweg. I said to him, They covered you with flowers, but he would not look at the matter altogether lightly. He said more than once that he considered that very good results had been accomplished. I have no doubt that Bethmann-Hollweg will also have produced a most favourable impression on other Russian Ministers. It will be interesting to hear what Kokovtsoff has to tell us about the meeting. Louis applied to see him, but was

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. V of 1912.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced, as the letter has not been traced.]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced, as the tenour is sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 28705/24202/12/88:)]

⁽⁴⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 580-2, No. 584.]

asked to wait until Bethmann had gone, and I thought that as Buchanan returns in two days it was better that he, and not I, should have an interview with him. I have reported to you very fully what Sazonow told me about the meeting (supplemented by what he told Louis) so I will not go into it here.

I think you will agree with me that as one gains a further insight into Sazonow's Balkan policy, one realises that it is one which may lead some day to serious results. *À propos* of Nekludow's extraordinarily alarmist telegram, he gave me some curious information regarding conversations which have passed between him and the Bulgarians as to the latter's designs against Turkey. He said that when Danew (President of the Skuptchina) was here last April he showed considerable impatience and used bellicose language, saying that Bulgaria had waited a long time to take action and had lost many favourable opportunities. In particular he reproached Russia with having prevented Bulgaria from seizing her opportunity to attack Turkey in the spring of 1909. Sazonow seemed inclined to agree that from Bulgaria's point of view it would have been wise to attack Turkey at that moment. He said that by her action about the Turkish indemnity etc. Russia had at the time averted war, and he seemed to think that in so doing she had done a good turn to Turkey and a bad one to Bulgaria. When Danew spoke in the way described last April, Sazonow said to him that Bulgaria must have patience. "The Bulgarians were a young people, and the future in the Balkans was evidently theirs," but they must not spoil everything by precipitation. Moreover if they joined with Italy against Turkey they might find Italy making peace and leaving them in the lurch. He has now again told the Bulgarians that Italy seems inclined to make peace and that they would make a mistake in joining in the fray at this moment. It is evident that this sort of language, though it may restrain the Bulgarians from immediate warlike action, will encourage them in the long run, and it seems to come to this:—that Russia in order to keep the position which she has assumed as patroness of the Serbo-Bulgarian alliance finds it necessary to encourage those people in the belief that with Russia's support they will eventually divide up Macedonia. Sazonow speaks of Bulgaria's future attack on Turkey in a matter of fact way which is rather astonishing, and you may remember that he said to me once that nothing that was worth doing could be done without a certain amount of risk. . . .⁽⁵⁾

Yours very sincerely,

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

⁽⁵⁾ [The rest of this letter deals with the Serbo-Bulgarian secret agreement, the Russo-German agreement and the proposed visit of M. Sazonov to England.]

No. 591. -

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Paget.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 29599/2031/12/44.

(No. 10.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 15, 1912.

The Servian Chargé d'Affaires came to see Lord Onslow on the 11th inst[ant] about a private matter, and the latter asked him whether he had any news from Turkey.

M. Grouitch said that he had seen Ismail Kemal, who was now, or had been recently, in London. Ismail Kemal had told him that Albania was quite solid, that the Christians and Mussulmans were of one mind, and they were quite determined this time to see the thing through. Moreover Ismail Kemal had said that the

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

Anatolian troops were in sympathy with the Albanians and, if ordered to march against them, would refuse.

M. Grouitch, however, said that in Belgrade they were not inclined to share Ismail Kemal's view. They did not think that the movement was primarily an Albanian movement, or that the Albanians were solid. The movement was primarily anti-Committee, and on the whole the Serbs were not inclined to attach a great deal of importance to it.

What, however, was really preoccupying the minds of Servian statesmen was the attitude of Austria. M. Grouitch said that he was certain that one day sooner or later and on some pretext or another Austria would occupy the Sanjak. If the Austrians did that Servia would have to move troops into the Sanjak also, and no protest or action of the Powers would stop her from doing so. This was the view of all parties at Belgrade, and the late Prime Minister M. Milovanovitch had told him so emphatically. He went on to say that the conduct of Austria was most suspicious, and referred to the memoranda that he left with Sir L. Mallet, copies of which were enclosed in my despatch No. [8 of the 5th instant].⁽²⁾ He told me as an additional instance of Austria's bellicose operations that the Chief of the Austrian General Staff, accompanied by 20 officers, had recently been all along the Servian frontier carefully examining all the strategic points. He said that at present relations between Vienna and Belgrade were perfectly correct, and if only Servia could get some sort of assurance that Austria had no hostile designs on the Sanjak there was no reason why the two Powers should not be on the best possible terms. He was however personally sceptical of any such arrangement being reached, although he said that conversations were going on ("on parlemente tout le temps").

Lord O[nslow] enquired whether by that he meant that there were any negotiations with a specific purpose proceeding between Vienna and Belgrade and he replied in the negative, saying that conversations of a desultory kind were always going on with a view to find some means of quieting the state of tension, which he said undoubtedly existed in a high degree.

M. Grouitch spoke very emphatically as to what Servia would do if Austria occupied the Sanjak, and seemed quite certain that the Servians would take the course he had indicated if the eventuality arose.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

(²) [Not reproduced. The memoranda referred to the Austrian construction of forts and their occupation by troops, on the island of Ostrovo in the Danube, about 90 kilometres from Belgrade. The Servian Chargé d'Affaires considered that this action on the part of Austria was contrary to the spirit of Article 52 of the Treaty of Berlin. He was informed by Sir L. Mallet that from the position of Ostrovo the article could not possibly apply to it. (v. F.O. 28109/28109/12/39.) v. also immediately succeeding document.]

No. 592.

Lord Granville to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Berlin, July 16, 1912.

F.O. 30232/26943/12/44.

D. 8.16 P.M.

Tel. (No. 75.)

R. 9 P.M.

My telegram No. 69:⁽²⁾ Situation in Balkans.

Servian chargé d'affaires used most warlike language to the Acting Secretary of State a day or two ago, saying that, if mutiny extended into Roumelia, Bulgaria

(¹) [This telegram was sent to St. Petersburg (as No. 577); to Constantinople (as No. 379); to Rome (as No. 228); to Belgrade (as No. 1); to Sofia (as No. 8). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

(²) [v. *supra*, p. 583, No. 586.]

would certainly move, and Serbia would be bound to march too. Acting Secretary of State spoke to him very seriously, urging absolute necessity of keeping quiet, and pointing out that, if Bulgaria and Serbia began warlike operations, Turkey would at once fall on them with full force and could undoubtedly crush them. He added that Albanians, in spite of their present unrest, would undoubtedly prefer Turkish rule to that of any other Power, as there was no possibility of their independence.

Acting Secretary of State is very nervous about the situation, but he also, like Mr. O'Beirne, gathers that Russian Minister at Sophia is inclined to take pessimistic views, and German Minister at Sophia, now on leave, refuses to believe in danger, as he is confident of the peaceful intentions of the King of Bulgaria and of M. Gueschoff.

No. 593.

Sir R. Paget to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 30919/28109/12/39.

(No. 45.)

Belgrade, D. July 16, 1912.

Sir,

R. July 22, 1912.

I yesterday called upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and asked him concerning the fortification by Austria of the island of Ostrovo which, as stated in your Despatch No. 8 of the 5th instant,⁽²⁾ was recently brought to the attention of Sir L. Mallet by the Servian Chargé d'Affaires.

I told Monsieur Yovanovitch⁽³⁾ that I had seen some account of the Austrian proceedings both on Ostrovo and on the Bosnian frontier in the Servian newspapers but as the local Press was rather inclined to have Austrian aggression on the brain I had not thought it worth special attention.

Monsieur Yovanovitch replied that he would have mentioned the matter to me before but he thought Monsieur Milovanovitch intended to do so and since the latter's death he had had no opportunity. He then told me that Ostrovo is opposite Dubrovitz at the junction of the Morava with the Danube. The island is entirely on the Servian side of the latter river, separated from the bank only by a shallow ford, which will not improbably be dry in another few years. The Austrian batteries, of which there are five, have been erected so as to command the entrance to the Morava.

The explanation given by the Austrian Military Authorities is that these fortifications have been built in contemplation of manœuvres on a large scale which are to take place next autumn and which are to include combined exercises between the army and the Danube flotilla. With this interpretation, however, Monsieur Yovanovitch does not feel at all satisfied. He is decidedly pessimistic, and thinks that in reality the works are in preparation of an Austrian advance into Servia whenever the moment may appear expedient. His idea is that when Austria considers the political situation to justify her advance it is the plan of the Military Authorities, as far as possible, to take Servia by surprise, to crush all resistance at once by pouring a body of troops far exceeding in numbers the Servian army into the valley of the Morava, and to march viâ Semendria and Obrenovatz south of Uzitze and the Sandjak of Novi-bazar. Monsieur Yovanovitch did not of course commit himself as to when he expected all this to happen but said Austrian preparations were such as to be somewhat alarming.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 588-9. No. 591, note ⁽²⁾.]

⁽³⁾ [M. Milovanović, Minister for Foreign Affairs in Servia, died, after a short illness, on July 1, 1912, and was succeeded by M. Pašić.]

Monsieur Yovanovitch did not refer to the Article of the Berlin Treaty concerning the fortification of Islands in the Danube.

I have, &c.
RALPH PAGET.

MINUTE.

The measure taken by Austria is a very natural one, as she has now knowledge, in a general way, of the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty.

A. N
E. G

No. 594.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 31867/31867/12/38.

(No. 226.)

St. Petersburg, D. July 18, 1912.

Sir,

R. July 29, 1912.

The President of the Council, on whom I called yesterday, spoke to me at considerable length on the general political situation.

Monsieur Kokovtsoff began the conversation by enquiring what impression I had brought back as to the sentiments entertained for Russia in official circles in England. I replied that during my recent stay in London I had had conversations with many members of the Cabinet, as well as with some of the Leaders of the Opposition, and that I had found that they all without exception desired to cultivate the most friendly relations with Russia and to maintain the Anglo-Russian understanding, which was, in their opinion, one of our vital interests. They had also expressed to me their entire confidence in the loyalty and good faith of the Imperial Government.

Monsieur Kokovtsoff replied that this confidence was not misplaced. The Imperial Government was animated by exactly similar feelings towards Great Britain, and though during the past winter difficulties had arisen with regard to Persia, he knew of nothing that could cause a division between us. His Excellency then proceeded to tell me what Monsieur Sazonoff had already told Mr. O'Beirne⁽¹⁾ with regard to the recent meeting of the two Emperors. He dwelt with particular satisfaction on the fact that no attempt had been made by Germany to draw Russia away from France and England, and said that it was mainly on this account that the Emperor had carried away such a pleasant impression from his conversations with the Emperor William. On my referring to the satisfaction with which the "communiqué" on the subject of the meeting had been received in England, Monsieur Kokovtsoff said that the text had been drawn up by Monsieur Sazonoff and himself and had been frankly accepted with a few unimportant corrections by the German Chancellor. His Excellency added that everybody, from the Emperor down to the humblest Secretary, had been charmed by Monsieur Bethmann-Hollweg's sympathetic personality.

On my enquiring what view he took of the international outlook, Monsieur Kokovtsoff said that though there were clouds on the political horizon and though diplomacy was confronted with many difficult problems in Persia, China and the Near East, he personally saw no reason to fear any grave international complications. The Persian question concerned Great Britain and Russia alone, so that there was no real danger to apprehend in that quarter; though both Great Britain and Russia, and more especially the latter, were suffering much material loss from the state of anarchy prevailing in that country. I here objected that our trade in the South was being absolutely ruined, which was not the case with Russian trade in the North.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 580-2, No. 584.]

To this His Excellency replied that though in a certain sense this might be true, we had from prudential motives refrained from incurring the heavy expenditure of sending a military expedition to maintain order in our sphere of influence, like Russia had done in hers, and that if Russian trade had consequently suffered less than British, the cost of the prolonged occupation of Northern Persia by Russian troops must also be taken into account.

In reply to my enquiry as to whether he saw any issue from the impasse into which Persian Affairs had drifted, Monsieur Kokovtsoff said that he had no specific remedy to propose for the ills from which Persia was suffering. He did not, however, regard her condition as absolutely hopeless. She would, he thought, derive considerable benefit from the Trans-Persian Railway, which would, were it eventually constructed, further the interests of civilisation and order. The Persian Government, however, would only grant the necessary concession in return for a loan and he trusted that it might be possible to arrange for one of between two and three million pounds. Such a loan would, after covering Persia's indebtedness to the two Banks, leave her a sufficient sum wherewith to create an effective Gendarmerie. The Maliat ought to furnish the greater part of the interest on the loan, provided that it was regularly collected with the assistance of a Gendarmerie and that a certain measure of financial control were vested in the two Banks. His Excellency also alluded to the necessity of effecting judicial reforms, but did not say whether he contemplated the introduction of Mixed Tribunals, to which reference was made recently in a telegram from the "Times" correspondent at Tehran. He also hinted that the two Governments would have to exercise a more effective administrative and financial control than they did at present.

With regard to the loan of which he had spoken, I remarked that we were, I feared, moving in a vicious circle. No financial Group was likely to float a large loan until there was some prospect of order being re-established, while a Gendarmerie capable of restoring order could not possibly be created without a loan.

Monsieur Kokovtsoff saw no reason to apprehend international complications in China, though he took a very pessimistic view of the present situation in that country. Russia, he said, had, in order to meet our wishes and to keep in line with the other Powers, made very considerable concessions with regard to the proposed loan. Nothing, however, would induce her to consent to any further advances to the Chinese Government without a guarantee that the purposes to which such advances were to be applied should be effectively controlled. As regards the future of the country, Monsieur Kokovtsoff expressed the opinion that the Revolution would end, like the French Revolution had ended, by the rise of a dictator, who would consolidate his position by wholesale massacres of those who opposed him.

It was only in the Near East that Monsieur Kokovtsoff saw any danger of trouble arising that might lead to international complications; though even here he was inclined to be optimistic. Bulgaria, he said, would never move without Russia's permission and the Emperor Nicholas was far too prudent a Sovereign to allow her to embark on a policy of adventure.

His Excellency, in conclusion, expressed himself as very satisfied with the internal situation in this country. The harvest promised to be a good one and if this proved to be the case there would be no serious political unrest. While it was impossible to foretell the result of the approaching Elections, he personally believed that there would be but little change in the composition of the Duma.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

No. 595.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*St. Petersburg, July 22, 1912.* "

D. 2.50 P.M.

R. 6.30 P.M.

F.O. 31151/26943/12/44.

Tel. (No. 256.)

Vienna telegram No. 59 (July 17).⁽²⁾

President of the Council, to whom I spoke last week on the Balkan situation, said that Bulgaria would not move without Russia's permission, and that Emperor of Russia was far too prudent to encourage policy of adventure.

Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, who passed through St. Petersburg yesterday, shared views of Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs that the danger will be greatly minimised if the Turkish army is united. Russia is constantly giving restraining counsels at Sophia, but if anything in the shape of civil war were to break out in Turkey, Russia would, his Excellency said, be powerless, as nothing would then stop Bulgaria.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It reported the danger of civil war in Turkey owing to dissatisfaction in the army. The Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs feared that nothing would then prevent a general Balkan war. (F.O. 30384/26943/12/44.)]

No. 596.

Sir R. Paget to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*Belgrade, July 22, 1912.*

D. 4.30 P.M.

R. 5.50 P.M.

F.O. 31152/26943/12/44.

Tel. (No. 2.)

Your telegram No. 1.⁽²⁾

I saw Minister for Foreign Affairs a week ago and again to-day, and on neither occasion did he manifest any anxiety about Bulgaria's intentions. He had heard from a private source of military preparations, but (groups undecypherable) Bulgaria should wish to be prepared for emergencies and is of opinion there is no danger so long as M. Gueschoff is in office and that Bulgarian action will depend on attitude of the Great Powers.

In the event of Bulgaria attacking Turkey, Minister for Foreign Affairs says that national interests and aspirations would compel Serbia to join. He recognises fact that Servian and Bulgarian armies might fare badly at the hands of Turks, also Austrian troops would at once enter Serbia, but Servian hopes are based on fact that when matters arrive at that stage other Powers will intervene. He assures me that there is no definite agreement between Serbia and Bulgaria, but that ground is so well prepared that, in case of emergency, one might be concluded without delay.

MINUTE.

The Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs's conviction that other Powers would intervene in the circumstances is optimistic. The last sentence of the telegram is strange.

H. N.

July 23, 1912.

R. P. M.

A. N.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 589-90, No. 592, and *note* (1).]

No. 597.

Sir R. Paget to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 38009/26943/12/44.

(No. 47.)

Belgrade, D. July 23, 1912.

Sir,

R. August 6, 1912.

Some ten days ago, in view of a report I had seen in the Press I enquired of the Minister for Foreign Affairs whether he had any news of supposed excitement and military preparations in Bulgaria. He replied that he had not heard anything to this effect from Sofia, and thought the Press report was probably much exaggerated. I concluded, therefore, on receiving your telegram No. 1 of the 18th instant,⁽²⁾ that in using alarmist language to the German Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs the Servian Chargé d'Affaires at Berlin had been giving his own impressions rather than those of his Government and this conclusion was confirmed when I again saw the Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday.

Monsieur Yovanovitch said he would surely have been advised by Monsieur Spalaikovitch the Servian Minister at Sofia, if anything abnormal had been in progress; he could, therefore, scarcely believe there was any real cause for uneasiness, and gave it as his opinion that so long as Monsieur Gueschoff or Monsieur Daneff were at the head of affairs there would be little danger of war and that really warlike preparations would be preceded by a change of cabinet. It seemed to him that the situation lay entirely in the hands of the Great Powers as Bulgaria could scarcely dare to move except upon a sign from Austria who in her turn would previously have to assure herself of Germany. Of course, should Bulgaria attack Turkey Serbia would inevitably be drawn into the fray by her national aspirations in old Serbia however much the Government might at the present moment wish to avoid war and although it is their determination not to be the originators of any trouble.

Monsieur Yovanovitch fully realises the possibility of Bulgaria and Serbia suffering defeat at the hands of Turkey and more vividly the probability that at the first sign of hostilities Austrian troops may enter Serbia. The effect of either of these eventualities would be the reverse of advantageous to Servian aspirations but he maintains that Serbia could not remain inactive, that she hopes to be able to some extent to offer some resistance to Austrian troops and that she may find protection in the intervention of Russia and other Powers.

Speaking generally the impression in Belgrade both among Servians and among my foreign Colleagues is that the Turks are on their last legs and that serious events are impending but no one seems to know what form these events may take. Almost every day brings news of some fresh Austrian military measure directed against Serbia whilst I hear well authenticated reports that the Servian Government are intriguing with the Albanian malcontents and are busy preparing the ground for an advance into old Serbia. Both Monsieur de Hartwig and Monsieur Tosheff my Russian and Bulgarian Colleagues have told me they expect the prospective "bouleversement" about the beginning of September though neither could give any very good reason for selecting that particular time. Possibly it is that the harvest will by then be over.

I have, &c.

RALPH PAGET.

MINUTE.

This, though vague, is disquieting, though I do not see what can be done. Warnings have been lavished at Sofia and M. Gueschoff's attitude is all that can be desired. So long as he remains at the helm peace will be preserved, but if he finds his position untenable and resigns, probably nothing can stop a Bulgarian attack on Turkey.

H. N.
L. M.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 589-90, No. 592, and *note* (1), the date should be 16th instant.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 31667/26943/12/44.

(No. 43.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 23, 1912.

Count Mensdorff told me to-day that he was soon going on leave and would be seeing Count Berchtold, who, he knew, would be pleased to have conveyed to him any views of mine.

I said that my difficulty was that there was so little to say: if I did not say much, this was the reason, and not any reluctance on my part to keep in touch with Count Berchtold. We wished to see the "status quo" preserved in the Balkans. The only danger of a disturbance seemed to be the internal situation in Turkey; but, if the "status quo" was disturbed, I hoped that the Powers more directly interested in the Balkans than we were would not fall out amongst themselves. I understood that Count Berchtold's view coincided with mine, but of course it might be easier for him to form his view and obtain information as to the prospect in the Balkans than for me, as Austria-Hungary was more directly interested in the situation there, and closer to it.

Count Mensdorff confirmed my impression as to Count Berchtold's view. His Government desired to maintain the "status quo"; but he was afraid that some other Governments might recently have modified their views a little. He spoke of Monsieur Tcharikoff's action in Constantinople as an indication of this, and observed that any modification of an international Treaty, such as an alteration with regard to the Straits would be a modification of the "status quo."

I said that Monsieur Tcharikoff had been moved from Constantinople, and the Russian Government were not giving us any indication of an intention to raise the question of the Straits. As far as Turkey was concerned, they seemed entirely preoccupied with the dispute as to the Turco-Persian frontier in the neighbourhood of Urumiah. No doubt international Treaties were sometimes modified, and it was true that such a modification was an alteration of the "status quo." There had been an example in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina. But such modifications were on a different footing from a violent upsetting of the "status quo," such as had occurred in the war between Turkey and Italy, or might occur if there were serious internal troubles in Turkey. I did not think that there was likely to be a serious violation of the "status quo" in the Balkans owing to outside influences: the danger was in the internal situation of Turkey.

Count Mensdorff said that the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina did not really change affairs, as they were already occupied by Austria-Hungary.

Finally, I repeated that I wished to see disturbance of the "status quo" in the Balkans avoided; but that, if the internal situation of Turkey precipitated a disturbance, I hoped that the Powers directly interested would not fall out amongst themselves. I recognised, of course, that the other Powers were also interested in this, through their diplomatic relations with Austria-Hungary or Russia. I added that, as I had said in a recent speech,⁽¹⁾ separate groups of Powers need not necessarily mean opposing diplomatic camps, and that the way in which the Powers had kept together with regard to the war between Turkey and Italy was a favourable instance of this.

Count Mensdorff told me that Count Berchtold had been very pleased with this passage in my speech, and also with what I had said about our not abandoning the Mediterranean, which had given Count Berchtold great satisfaction.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

(¹) [*v. Parl. Deb., 5th Ser. (House of Commons), Vol. 40, pp. 1994-5.*]

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

St. Petersburg, July 25, 1912.

. . . .⁽²⁾ Sazonow then proceeded to say that though nothing had been actually said on the subject, he was convinced that German and Austrian policy was directed to the reestablishment of the Dreikaiserbund. At the Baltic meeting the conversation was continually being brought round to the necessity of all working together for the maintenance of the monarchical principle. He had avoided as far as possible being drawn into a discussion on the subject, and had contented himself with dwelling on the fact that the Russian Government was an autocracy. He had since received an "invitation à la danse." The Austrian Ambassador had called on him immediately after the Baltic meeting and had intimated that Berchtold was very anxious to meet him. Thurn had enquired whether Sazonow contemplated going abroad in the course of the summer, as in that case Berchtold would arrange to come and see him at any place he liked to name. Sazonow told me that as at that time nothing had been settled about his visit to England, he was able to say with truth that he had made no plans for a foreign trip. He did not however tell Thurn, as he might have done, that if Berchtold wanted to see him the proper course would be to suggest coming to St. Petersburg, as he was afraid that this might be interpreted as an invitation to him to do so. The reestablishment of the Dreikaiserbund would, Sazonow remarked, be a disaster for Europe. It would mean the dissolution of the Triple Entente, while Russia were she to enter into such a combination, would virtually be placed at the mercy of the two Central Powers.

It is satisfactory to know that Sazonow takes this line, as there can be but little doubt that his view of the aims of Austro-German policy is a correct one. It would no doubt make for peace if Russia and Austria could come to some understanding about the Balkans to which the other Powers could also adhere; but I have always felt that it is rather dangerous for us to encourage an Austro-Russian understanding, for fear that it might end in an alliance of the three Emperors. There is much to render such an alliance attractive to Russia, more especially were Austria to offer her generous terms as regards the future of the Balkans; but so long as Sazonow directs her foreign policy, there is no danger I think of her yielding to this temptation. . . .⁽³⁾

Ever yours,

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. VI of 1912.]

⁽²⁾ [The omitted paragraphs refer to M. Sazonov's visit to England and other matters.]

⁽³⁾ [The rest of the letter refers to the visit of the Japanese Ambassador to St. Petersburg.]

Sir R. Paget to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 98010/2031/12/44.

(No. 48.)

Belgrade, D. July 27, 1912.

Sir,

R. August 6, 1912.

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your despatch No. 10 of the 15th instant,⁽²⁾ relating the substance of a conversation between Lord Onslow and the Servian Chargé d'Affaires on the situation in Albania and more especially the attitude of Austria towards Servia.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 588-9, No. 591.]

From conversations with the Minister for Foreign Affairs I have gathered that, as stated by Monsieur Grouitch, the Servian Government look upon the insurrection in Albania as directed against the Young Turks rather than as an Albanian movement but I cannot entirely agree that they do not attach a great deal of importance to it. Monsieur Yovanovitch has all along expressed the opinion that judging by certain indications this rising threatened to be more serious than those of previous years and might well lead to serious developments. Probably the Government's views are more or less correctly conveyed by the official organ the "Samouprava" which, on several occasions lately has expressed the hope that Turkey would be sufficiently strong to overcome the present crisis but at the same time made the reflection that the mutiny made the outcome very doubtful.

With regard to the question of Austrian designs it is certainly not surprising that Servians should feel considerable uneasiness. In my despatch No. 45 of the 16th instant⁽³⁾ I reported concerning the fortification of the island of Ostrovo and the view which the Servian authorities take of this step but many other indications of aggressive preparation, of which the following are examples, have been reported in the Servian Press: according to the "Politica," a semi-official journal, large bodies of Austrian troops are now stationed at five different points on the Danube and Save opposite the Servian frontier namely: at Shabatz, Obrenovatz, Semendria, Ostrovo and Dolnie Milanovatz.

Orders have been issued by the Croatian Authorities to deprive all Serbs on the Save of arms.

The Hungarian Railways have received orders to keep rolling stock in readiness for the transport of troops and this at a moment when rolling stock is most needed for the harvest.

The Austrian Military journals announce that the Manœuvres this year will be held close to the Servian frontier and that Austrian Monitors will take part in the manœuvres opposite the Servian shore.

In connection with this latter item of news I may mention that Major Gellinek, the Austrian Military Attaché in Belgrade, in referring to the fortifications of Ostrovo and other Military preparations admitted quite candidly to one of my colleagues that these were "not with a view to manœuvres," as per official explanation, and he went on to lament that the roads were so bad in the valley of the Morava that troops could only operate there with difficulty.

I gather from his statement to Lord Onslow that Monsieur Grouitch still contemplates the possibility of Austria as a first step putting troops into the Sandjak viâ Herzegovina and of Servia being able to reply by likewise marching into the Sandjak but so far as I know all Military Authorities now hold that Austria would not enter the Sandjak except after crushing and marching through Servia. Before Servia can think of her rights and aspirations in the Sandjak therefore she will have to fight for her very existence.

I am told that not long ago Monsieur Simitch the Servian Minister at Vienna was instructed to enquire the reason of the present Austrian military preparations but got very little satisfaction from Count Berchtold who merely replied that he was not aware of anything unusual and in such a manner as to discourage any further representation of the sort from the Servian Government.

A circumstance which seems to add considerably to Servian fears is that of late the Austrian press has brought various accusations against the Servian Government, such as being the instigators of Croatia unrest and of the several attempts that have been made recently to blow up Austrian powder magazines. It is recalled that accusations of the same kind preceded the Bosnia-Herzegovina crisis and hence it is inferred that Austria is preparing for another coup. A small portion of the Servian Press has advocated mobilization and meeting Austrian preparations by counter preparations but on the whole more moderate counsels prevail. During the last few days a more

(3) [*v. supra*, pp. 590-1, No. 598.]

hopeful tone is noticeable. It is pointed out that the situation is not so serious as it appeared, that things are gradually improving in Turkey and there is now every prospect of her weathering the storm whilst if there were any real danger King Ferdinand would not be absent from Sofia nor King Peter, the Prime Minister and Monsieur Pashitch from Belgrade.

Appearances may of course be against Austria and it is only natural that after past experiences Servians should be suspicious of her designs but on the other hand it would also be unreasonable in the face of the unsettled condition of Turkey and its possible consequences, to expect the Austrian Military Authorities to remain entirely inactive and run the risk of being surprised by events. Military preparedness, moreover, will enable Austria, if she honestly desires to keep the peace, to exercise a far more effective restraint than mere words upon Bulgaria and Servia should they be tempted by circumstances to attack Turkey.

I have, &c.

RALPH PAGET.

No. 601.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

St Petersburg, July 27, 1912.

F.O. 31852/26943/12/44.

D. 3.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 261.)

R. 7 P.M.

Referring in conversation last night to latest news from Mitrovitsa, Minister for Foreign Affairs expressed grave preoccupation with regard to Balkan situation. He assured me that Russia was using all her influence to keep Bulgaria quiet, but said that if matters took a turn for the worse it would be necessary for the Powers to consult together with a view to exercise collective pressure at Sophia. Germany and Austria would, he had reason to believe, co-operate with Russia in this matter, as neither of them wanted to see peace disturbed in the Balkans.

On my enquiring what sort of pressure we could bring to bear on Bulgaria, his Excellency replied that we could warn her that she would be exposed to an attack from Roumania. Were Bulgaria to move, Roumania would certainly mobilise, and he could only hope that her action would be confined to mobilisation. Were Servia to march as well, Bulgaria's situation would become still more serious, as it was impossible to say what Austria would do in such a case.

His Excellency's language was somewhat different from that reported in my telegram No. 256 of July 22,⁽²⁾ but I do not think that he will propose collective action at present, as he spoke of the Bulgarian Prime Minister as being pacifically inclined.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 593, No. 595.]

No. 602.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 33005/26943/12/44.

(No. 71.)

Sir,

Sofia, D. July 30, 1912.

R. August 6, 1912.

I have the honour to report that last week, when I had an interview with Monsieur Gueshoff, I felt that beneath his reassuring attitude there flowed a slight current of uneasiness at the situation in Turkey. Yesterday, when I saw His

Excellency again, his anxiety was much more marked. He seemed harassed at the turn affairs were taking at Constantinople, having been reliably informed of the probable dissolution of the Turkish Chamber. He was especially worried by the news of the serious split in the Turkish army and he appeared to dread the outbreak of Civil War with the inevitable consequences in Macedonia. Monsieur Gueshoff added, however, that notwithstanding the blackness of the outlook, while there is life there is hope and that the only thing to do is to wait and watch developments. He was still firm in his assurances that Bulgaria would not take advantage of Turkey's plight to attack her gratuitously; but there evidently lurked in his mind visions of possible massacres in Macedonia which might leave Bulgaria no alternative but to intervene.

In reply to a direct question, His Excellency assured me most positively that at present no special military measures whatever were being taken in Bulgaria.

As for the Press, it is almost exclusively engrossed in the religious questions which I have treated in another Despatch.⁽¹⁾ In some quarters it is maintained that the present apparent calm is unnatural in Bulgaria under prevailing conditions and that it may well be the result of a 'mot d'ordre.'

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

•
MINUTE.

Things have grown a little better since this was written. The Turkish army is pretty well united against the Committee and the danger of civil war is less for the moment.

H. N.

[August 18, 1912.]

L. M

.(1) [Not reproduced.]

No. 603.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.

F.O. 93470/93470/12/44.

(No. 182.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 6, 1912.

The Italian Ambassador came to see me to-day, and asked me about a report, which had appeared in "The Times," that Bulgaria and Servia had come to an agreement with each other.⁽¹⁾ Was it true, and had I any information about it?

I said that nothing had occurred in which we had had a hand.

The Ambassador observed that, nevertheless, he thought there was no doubt that the relations between Bulgaria and Servia had become much closer, and very friendly.

I replied that this was true.

The Ambassador then said that Austria would not like it.

I answered that I did not see why Austria should mind, so long as any improvement of relations between Bulgaria and Servia had a purely negative form.

The Ambassador said that he was sure that Bulgaria must be entirely in the hands of Russia.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [cp. the *Times*, August 1, 1912, p. 8, and *ib.*, July 30, 1912, p. 7. cp. also *supra*, pp. 556-8, No. 559, and *encl.*]

Count de Sals to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 34435/32869/12/44.

(No. 28.)

Sir,

Cettinje, D. August 9, 1912.

R. August 15, 1912.

As I have already had the honour to report briefly to you,⁽²⁾ a serious encounter took place on the 4th of August last between Turkish and Montenegrin troops. The scene of the fighting has been variously described as Mojkovac or Przishtë, to the North East of Kolashin. Mojkovac is the point where, according to article 28 of the Treaty of Berlin, the frontier leaves the course of the River Tara and follows the crest of the hills.

The immediate cause of the incident appears to have been a dispute with regard to the right to the hay crop on certain meadow lands stated to be within the Montenegrin frontier. I have been unable so far to find out what was the nature of the Turkish claim, if any, to dispose of these lands. That the Turkish authorities were not disposed seriously to maintain one would appear to be indicated by a phrase in a note from Rustem Bey of the 5th of August. Meanwhile, the Montenegrin peasants, the owners of the lands, were driven off by the Turkish soldiers who, for that purpose, not only occupied a blockhouse on Turkish territory but who actually crossed the boundary and threw up entrenchments on the Montenegrin side of the frontier. On their attempting to cut the grass crop after notice had been given to the Turkish Legation, the peasants were attacked by the Turks who were in turn assailed by the Montenegrin forces and driven out of their entrenchments on the Montenegrin side of the frontier. The blockhouse was also taken and burnt and according to some accounts the pursuit of the Turks was continued into Turkish territory for some two or three hours.

On the following day, the 6th of August, Rustem Bey the Turkish Minister addressed a note to the Montenegrin Government requiring them to furnish him before the following evening with a written assurance that their troops had received orders to retire from Ottoman territory and to accompany it with an expression of regret for the attitude which the Montenegrin authorities had adopted in the matter. I would remark that in the course of the note the fact that the Turks had thrown up entrenchments on Montenegrin soil is alluded to as merely an "excès de zèle," while no explanation or defence is offered of the attempts of the Turkish soldiers to interfere with the cutting of the hay crop on Montenegrin territory. After allusions to other matters, including the Malissor rising of last year, which have no direct bearing on the question, the writer concludes with a strange phrase with regard to "comptabilité diplomatique," the intended meaning of which would appear to be that, whatever the rights or wrongs of the present incident, Montenegro has been the most frequent offender in the past.

The Montenegrin reply, dated the 6th of August, contains an assurance that the Montenegrins had quitted Turkish territory, the fact that they had crossed the frontier and burnt the blockhouse being admitted. The remainder of the note is concerned with recriminations as to previous incidents. The same evening the Turkish Minister sent a rejoinder to the effect that as the satisfaction he required had not been given to him he was leaving Cettinje, the ground for this decision being the action of the Montenegrin Government in having resorted to force without having made a final appeal to the Turkish Legation.

In the course of the 7th August the King was, I gather, disposed to be conciliatory and anxious to avoid a rupture with the Turkish Legation; there appeared indeed to be some hope that the precedent of the Casablanca affair,⁽³⁾ to

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Reported by telegram No. 8 of August 5, D. 2.20 p.m., R. 7.30 p.m. Not reproduced, as the incident is more fully described above (F.O. 32869/32869/12/44.).]

⁽³⁾ [This subject is treated in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol VII.]

which I ventured to refer in some quarters, might be followed, and that both parties might be brought to see that the matter might be a suitable subject for expressions of mutual regret. But the incident was unexpectedly terminated the same evening by the news that the Porte had disavowed the action of the Legation. Rustem Bey telegraphed on the following day to the Porte to tender his resignation and left the same afternoon for Cattaro.

I have the honour to enclose herewith copies of the notes exchanged between the Montenegrin Government and the Turkish Legation to which I have referred, together with an explanatory memorandum on certain points which has been furnished to me by the Montenegrin Foreign Department.⁽¹⁾

I have, &c.

J. DE SALIS.

MINUTE.

We have of course had the substance of this incident by telegraph, but the despatch reviews the question very well.

It is fortunate that Rustem Bey was disavowed, and the notes he wrote lend colour to Miss Duiham's assertion that he suffers from morphinomania.

There is a voluminous correspondence about the attempts to demarcate the Turco-Montenegrin frontier after the Treaty of Berlin. The frontier there laid down could not be generally adopted in practice owing to the fact that in many instances it divided villages from their pasture grounds, and although there have been repeated attempts at compromises, the whole frontier has never been finally and definitely fixed. Dervish Pasha, who spent most of his existence in creating friction on Turkey's various frontiers, did much to prevent a satisfactory settlement of this frontier question. As long as the Turco-Montenegrin frontier remains more or less unfixed at certain points there will be a risk of collisions, especially at such times of unrest as the present.

A. P.

August 24. 1912.

(See No. 34555.⁽²⁾)

H. N.

L. M.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 602-3, No. 606.]

No. 605.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35408/32869/12/44.

(No. 73.)

Sir,

Sofia, D. August 9, 1912.

R. August 21, 1912.

The Russian Minister told me to-day that he had yesterday informed the Bulgarian Government that Russia did not consider the collisions which had lately taken place between Turkish and Montenegrin troops as other than incidents to be settled by diplomatic means: that Russia felt convinced that it was neither Montenegro's intention to cause international disturbances in the Balkans nor Turkey's desire to increase her already considerable difficulties: that the Russian Government had told King Nicholas that he must keep quiet and that, unless he did so, he must not count upon Russian sympathy.

M. de Nekludow gathered from the wording of the telegram which he had received from St. Petersburg that similar instructions had been sent to Belgrade and Athens.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

The fact that such a communication should have been made to those Governments would indicate that its contents were intended to serve as a reminder to them also to keep quiet.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

No. 606.

Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O 34555/32869/12/44.

(No. 29.)

Sir,

Cettinje, D. August 10, 1912.

R. August 16, 1912.

With reference to my despatches No. 27 of the 18th July,⁽²⁾ and No. 28 of yesterday's date,⁽³⁾ I have the honour to transmit to you herewith copy of a note⁽⁴⁾ received from the Montenegrin Government referring to the recent incidents on the Turco-Montenegrin frontier.

The Montenegrin Government urge that the frontier established by the Treaty of Berlin was traced by an international Commission which did not take sufficiently into account the nature of the ground and the agricultural needs of the population. Outrages have accordingly been committed (The Montenegrin note alludes only to the aggressions of the Turks under cover of their blockhouses) and in order to prevent their recurrence attempts have been made to arrive at an amicable arrangement by means of mixed commissions. But in 1908 when an exchange of territory was agreed to, the Turkish Government failed to ratify the settlements accepted by their commissioners, while the negotiations conducted by another commission in 1911 were abortive. The agreement arrived at this year has not been sanctioned. In these circumstances the Montenegrin Government appeal to the Powers signatories of the Treaty of Berlin to find radical means of putting a stop to the existing state of things.

In my despatches No. 53 of the 8th December, 1911,⁽⁵⁾ and No. 27 of the 19th July,⁽²⁾ I have reported to you communications to the same effect made to me by the Montenegrin Government.

The Russian Minister, M. de Giers, whom I consulted on the subject told me that he would recommend the note to the earnest consideration of his Government. It was desirable in the interests of humanity to put a stop to these incidents and to remove at the same time the danger that either party might be tempted at a given moment to create them for its own purposes.

I have, &c.

J. DE SALIS.

MINUTE.

This question, arising at such a moment as the present, appears to me to be fraught with so much danger that I think we should suggest to the Russians to press the Turks to sanction

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. This despatch, dated July 18, reported an affray between Turkish and Montenegrin troops at Podgoritza on the frontier. An arrangement as to the frontier had been agreed on by the boundary commissioners, and Sir Edward Grey was urged to intervene at Constantinople to hasten the ratification of the arrangement. (F.O. 81327/2973/12/27.)]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 600-1, No. 604.]

⁽⁴⁾ [Not reproduced. It reported the complaints made by the Montenegrin Government of repeated infringements of the frontier on the part of the Turks.]

⁽⁵⁾ [Not reproduced. It mentioned recurring incidents on the Turkish frontier. (F.O. 49896/49896/11/44.)]

the agreement of this year, promising our support. We might ask the French also to support them, as soon as we learn that they are willing to act.

See 35691 (6)

H N.

L M.
E. G.

(6) [Telegram No. 326 of August 23, 1912, from Mr. Marling, Constantinople, reported that the Russian Ambassador's suggestion had been made more than a fortnight ago, and he agreed that it was now too late for concerted action. A favourable moment for urging ratification of the frontier arrangement might be found in the course of the work of Ibrahim Pasha's commission at Sentari (F.O. 35691/32869/12/44).]

No. 607.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey (1)

F.O. 35409/33672/12/44.

(No. 74.)

Sofia, D. August 10, 1912.

Sir.

R. August 21, 1912.

On the 6th instant vague rumours reached Sofia that a bomb outrage had been committed at Kochana, some 35 miles from the Bulgarian frontier to the north of Istib. According to accounts which have subsequently transpired from Bulgarian sources, it would seem that the facts were as follows. At nine o'clock in the morning of the 1st instant, when the market at Kochana was at its height, a bomb exploded killing 9 men 1 woman and 2 children and wounding a few others and occasioning a general stampede. Quiet had barely been resumed when a second bomb exploded at some distance from the first causing a general evacuation of the market-place. About twenty minutes later, when the peasants gradually reassembled and comparative calm was restored, Turkish soldiers, evidently summoned in the meantime, suddenly rushed upon the scene driving the crowd before them at the point of their bayonets. Simultaneously the police invaded the market-place from another quarter, the combined attack causing a general mêlée, during which men women and children indiscriminately were shot or trampled under foot, and shops were rifled. According to the latest information the deaths amount to 112 and the wounded to over 200. It is significant to note that of the former number, with the exception of five Turks and two Jews all were Bulgars.

On learning the news, M. Guèchoff instructed the Bulgarian Minister at Constantinople to make representations to the Porte asking 1. for an impartial enquiry, 2. for the prompt and exemplary punishment of the culprits—even for the shooting of some of those responsible—, 3. for the adoption of adequate measures to prevent any recurrence of such outrages. The Turkish Government have sent a commission of enquiry to the spot. It includes two Bulgars, Monsieur Liaptcheff, of the Appeal Court of Salonika, and M. Kintinceff, member of the Uscub [*sic*] Council.

M. Guèchoff has also instructed the Bulgarian representatives abroad to call the attention of the Governments to which they are accredited to the massacre, and to point out the very strong feeling caused in Bulgaria and the necessity of measures being taken by the Turkish Government to avoid the recurrence of such atrocities in future, the consequences of which might prove very dangerous.

I have just seen M. Guèchoff. He was evidently much concerned by the disastrous event, and his agitation was very marked. He considered the situation serious but he hoped that the Bulgarian Government would be able to curb the public ferment which was daily growing in intensity. He laid particular stress on the difference of attitude adopted by the Turkish troops who by their energetic measures some fortnight ago, when a bomb exploded at Ochrida, at once checked an incipient attack of the Turks on the Bulgarian population. It was clear proof, His Excellency said, that the Turkish Authorities could keep order if they chose.

(1) [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

The entire Press is filled with indignation at the massacre, and urges the Government to take more energetic action. Even the semi-official "Mir," which has hitherto carefully abstained from disparaging comments on recent events in Turkey, yesterday had a leading article showing change of mood in Government circles. The article points out that whilst the Albanians are allowed to dictate their own terms, the Christians are brutally murdered and that the extreme anarchy which prevails in the Turkish Empire can alone explain such barbarity. The article continues: "The inaction of those who in the name of peace in the Balkans condemn the people of the peninsula to such a situation for the maintenance of the *status quo* would constitute an international crime should its continuation be tolerated. It is time for Europe to intervene to secure order and tranquillity in the Empire. If European control is not imposed upon the Turks in time no advice or pressure will be able to ensure peace in the Balkans any longer. If by maintenance of *status quo* is meant tolerance of anarchy in Turkey until the complete extermination of Christians, all Balkan States, who have fellow-countrymen in the Empire, must protest, and, if not listened to, must themselves take their own measures."

The various Macedonian charitable institutions, 18 in number have elected an executive committee of five, with Colonel Protogeroff, who has resigned from the army, as President to organise meetings of protestation throughout the country.

The bomb outrage itself is only similar to others that have taken place at the instigation of the Macedonian organisation, and the subsequent savage butchery that ensued completed their plan, which was, as usual, calculated to stir up the inevitable indignation of Bulgaria and to force the hand of the Government if possible into taking some definite active steps against Turkey.

It is indeed fortunate that the Bulgarian Government should have as its head at this moment a man who so thoroughly understands the value of peace in such a critical time as the present, and it is to be hoped that they will continue to withstand popular pressure.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

MINUTE.

Mr. Barclay apparently accepts the version that the Macedonian organisation were responsible for the incident.

H. N.
L. M.
E. G.

No. 608.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Constantinople, August 10, 1912.

F.O. 93822/33672/12/44.

D. 3 P.M.

Tel. (No. 278.)

R. 7 P.M.

Your telegram No. 417 of August 9⁽²⁾ and my telegram No. 263 of August 2⁽³⁾: Bombs at Kochana.

From reports received to-day from consular officers at Salonica and Uskub following appear to be salient facts:—

Two bombs were exploded at about 11 A.M. in the bazaars, killing eleven persons, and Moslems at once commenced to attack Christians, mostly

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (by bag); to Sofia (as No. 10); to St. Petersburg (as No. 685); to Berlin (as No. 105); to Vienna (as No. 75). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced, as it merely asks for information. (F.O. 33672/33672/12/44.)]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced. It reported the explosion of a bomb at Kotchana. (F.O. 32720/19/12/44.)]

Bulgarians. Authorities appear to have taken no steps to restore order for an hour and a half, and when troops arrived they were slow to act, even if they did not take part in the massacre, which was not stopped till 2 o'clock. One account says that it lasted seven hours. Official version admits about 50 killed and 180 wounded, but killed alone probably exceeded 100.

Both accounts report local belief that the bomb outrage was the work of the Committee of Union and Progress in order to bring about a massacre.

Reports sent by post to-day.

MINUTES.

I should think the rumour in the last paragraph is probably correct.

A. P.

Aug. 12, 1912.

Another version is that the Bulgarian revolutionary organisation had the bombs exploded in order to bring about a massacre and force the Powers to intervene in favour of the Christians of Macedonia.

H. N.

L. M.

E. G.

No. 609.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 93823/93672/12/44.

Constantinople, D. August 10, 1912, 11 P.M.

Tel. (No. 279.)

R. August 11, 1912, 6 P.M.

My telegram No. 278, Aug[ust] 10⁽²⁾: Kochana incident.

French Ambassador has been instructed, after agreement with the German [*sic*] Ambassador and myself, to make strong friendly representations to the Porte to hold stringent investigation and punish the guilty.⁽³⁾ The Russian Ambassador hears from Sophia that public opinion in Bulgaria is very much inflamed, and that unless effective action is taken by the Porte to allay the excitement position of the present pacific Ministry may become untenable and a dangerous situation be created. I have agreed to speak to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the sense required.

On instructions from Sophia, the Bulgarian Minister requested nomination of the Bulgarian member of the local administrative council of Uskub to the commission of enquiry appointed by the Porte; his request was refused, but similar demand made by Exarch at the Bulgarian Minister's instigation has been agreed to, and a Bulgarian, who is a member of Salonica Court of Appeal, has been appointed. Bulgarian Minister is endeavouring by the same intermediary to obtain the appointment of a second Bulgarian member.

French and Russian reports agree that troops and gendarmerie took part in the massacre, and that the Exarchist [*sic*] was insulted and maltreated. The *kaïmakam*⁽⁴⁾ appears to have acted well, but the troops refused to obey.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (by bag); to St. Petersburg (as No. 636); to Sofia (as No. 11); to Berlin (as No. 66); to Vienna (as No. 76).]

⁽²⁾ [*v.* immediately preceding document.]

⁽³⁾ [*cp. D D.F.*, 3^{me} Sér., Vol. III, p. 330, No. 250. The instructions there given are for consultation with the Russian and British Ambassadors.]

⁽⁴⁾ [The actual meaning of the word is "deputy," probably in this case the head of the local administrative council of Uskub (the modern Skoplje).]

MINUTE.

It seems to have been very bad—and the fact that the gendarmerie and troops participated will make it very difficult to calm opinion in Bulgaria

A. P.
Aug[ust] 12, 1912
H. N.
L. M.
E. G.

No. 610.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 34686/20939/12/38.

(No. 248.)

St Petersburg, D. August 11, 1912.

Sir,

R. August 16, 1912.

I have the honour to inform you that Monsieur Poincaré arrived at Kronstadt, on board the French cruiser "Condé," on the evening of the 9th instant.⁽²⁾ His Excellency was met by the Minister of Marine, the French Ambassador and the Chief of the Naval Staff and came on to St. Petersburg in the Admiralty yacht next morning, when he was met by the President of the Council of Ministers, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Russian Ambassador in Paris and numerous other high officials. Yesterday evening he was entertained at dinner by Monsieur Sazonow.

The Russian Press has been practically unanimous in extending a warm welcome to Monsieur Poincaré and it is impossible not to be struck with the difference between the tone of the Press comments on the present occasion and that adopted by the more important journals at the time of the recent meeting of the two Emperors. The attitude of reserve which was then so noticeable has now given place to one of sincere and hearty cordiality. . . .⁽³⁾

The "Official Messenger" of to-day's date publishes the two following communiqués :

(1) "In connexion with the arrival of the French President of the Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Monsieur Poincaré, rumours have again become prevalent that the Russian Government intend to take advantage of the visit of Monsieur Poincaré to conclude a new loan, which, it is alleged, is necessary for the carrying out of the naval construction programme or for other needs arising out of the allied relations of Russia and France. For this reason the Ministry of Finance considers it incumbent to declare in the most categorical manner that all rumours of this character are devoid of the slightest foundation and may be attributed entirely to the sphere of idle inventions. The Russian Imperial Treasury, the state of which is known to all, is in no need of reinforcement by any new loan whatsoever."

(2) "The information which has appeared in the "Neue Freie Presse," alleging in connexion with the arrival of the President of the French Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Poincaré, that Russia intends to raise the question of the Dardanelles is fiction."

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. R. Poincaré. Au Service de la France, (Paris 1926), II, Chapters 4-5* For M. Sazonov's report to the Emperor, *v. Livre Noir, II, pp. 338-45. cp. also infra, pp. 613-7, Nos. 619-21; p. 619, No. 622, p. 633, No. 647*]

⁽³⁾ [The Press details which follow are not reproduced.]

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 84486/83470/12/44.

(No. 128.)

Sir,

Marienbad, D. August 12, 1912.

R. August 15, 1912.

I have the honour to inform you that rumours have of late been current in the Vienna Press with regard to the conclusion of an alliance between Serbia and Bulgaria.

The "Neue Freie Presse" of the 11th instant publishes a statement to the effect that diplomatic circles in Vienna have learned that negotiations have been proceeding for some time past between Serbia and Bulgaria with the object of concluding an alliance. Bulgaria and Serbia wish to settle what attitude they are to adopt in the future towards the other Balkan States in order to make sure of common action in certain eventualities. These negotiations, continues the statement, which do not at present appear to be completed, are being carried on under the patronage of Russia.

With regard to the attitude which the other Balkan States are likely to adopt towards a Serbo-Bulgarian Alliance, it can, concludes the "Neue Freie Presse," at present only be said that, if authentic news of the successful conclusion of such an alliance are to hand (it can only be a question of an offensive alliance) the Porte will take steps at Sofia and Belgrade to ascertain whether the alliance in question is directed against Turkey.

The "Neue Freie Presse" also publishes a Telegram from its correspondent in Belgrade stating that rumours have for some time past been circulated in that city of agreements between Serbia and Bulgaria and between Bulgaria and Montenegro, and that these rumours are somewhat strengthened by the fact that they have met with no official contradiction.

In another column the "Neue Freie Presse" comments on these reports which it regards as not altogether groundless, adducing as evidence the fact that the Turkish Minister at Sofia has returned somewhat hurriedly to his post. The "Neue Freie Presse" asserts that Serbia and Bulgaria have probably decided to come to an agreement on the urgent advice of Russia and that regard for the good-will of Russian diplomacy has carried more weight with them than their own interests. It is doubtful however how such an alliance would work out in practice, quite apart from the fact that in Balkan affairs another Power has an important voice. For, through Bosnia and Herzegovina Austria-Hungary herself has become a Balkan State. In the meanwhile, says the "Neue Freie Presse," the understanding may serve as a means of exerting pressure upon Turkey and this may indeed have been one of the objects of the two Governments in negotiating it. The crisis in Turkey has increased the excitement of her neighbours against her and lessened their respect. Russian diplomacy, concludes the "Neue Freie Presse," has warned Cettinje against making war, and it will probably give the same advice at Sofia and Belgrade, for Russia does not wish to be disturbed in the great tasks which lie before her by catastrophes in the Balkans. But at the same time in case of emergency she wishes to range the strength of the Balkan nations under her leadership and it is probable that the Serbo-Bulgarian Agreement, which has been or is to be concluded, had its origin largely in deference to her wishes.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

MINUTE.

This is obviously, I think, an inspired article.

A. P.
Aug[ust] 15, 1912.
H. N.
L. M.
E. G.

No. 612.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Sofia, August 12, 1912.

F.O. 34122/33672/12/44.

D. 3.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 22.)

R. 4.15 P.M.

Massacre at Kochana has rendered position of Bulgarian Prime Minister and M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] difficult for he is determined that, short of general massacres in Turkey nothing will induce him to change his hitherto friendly policy towards Turkey. For the present, therefore, the catastrophe will have no consequences probably beyond greatly embarrassing Cabinet here.

There is, however, one circumstance which would compel Bulgarian Government to adopt a diametrically opposed policy namely if Turkey were now to accord Albanians any political concession whatever tending to autonomy. Inevitable consequences in Macedonia and public pressure would force any Bulgarian Government to decisive action.

(Confidential.)

Bulgarian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] privately requested Servian Minister to convey gist of above paragraph to Turkish Chargé d'Affaires.

King starts for Carlsbad at the end of the week and simultaneously Ministry [*sic*] for Foreign Affairs intends taking leave.

Sent to Constantinople.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to St. Petersburg (as No. 64); to Vienna (as No. 77); to Paris (as No. 291), to Berlin (as No. 107) A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 613.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Constantinople, August 13, 1912.

F.O. 34253/19/12/44.

D. 2.15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 288.)

R. 10 P.M.

Mr. Barclay's telegram No. 22 Aug[ust] 12.⁽²⁾

The idea of granting political concessions tending towards autonomy, if it was ever seriously entertained, has been abandoned. I questioned Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday as to the Government's alleged intention to appoint a special inspector for the four Albanian vilayets, and he replied that Government were quite alive to the objections to the proposal, and, moreover, that, in view of difficulty of defining the geographical limits of such an official's labours, they considered it impracticable. Government desired to avoid creating a special régime in any legal

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 296); to Vienna (as No. 81); to St. Petersburg (as No. 650). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v.* immediately preceding document.]

form for Albania, but they had to take into consideration its peculiar local conditions, and would probably have to recognise some of its customary laws. They would, however, not introduce any special legislation, but they could not prevent Albanian deputies from doing so when the Chamber meets.

Russian Ambassador has been cautiously warning the Porte against any step in the direction of autonomy, but the Austrian Ambassador is naturally disposed to take an opposite view, but I do not think that he has expressed any opinion to the Turks.

Sent to Sophia.

No. 614.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 34876/33672/12/44.

(No. 79.)

Sir,

Sofia, D. August 14, 1912.

R. August 19, 1912.

With reference to my despatch No. 74 of the 10th instant,⁽²⁾ I have the honour to state that M. Guèchoff told me the day before yesterday that he was still without precise details of the massacre at Kotchana, and that it would probably take some considerable time to ascertain the exact number of victims as many peasants had gone to Kotchana for the market day, and their disappearance could only be established by the investigation which the Commission of enquiry would doubtless make in the neighbouring localities. M. Guèchoff went on to say that he had received assurances from the Porte that they would endeavour to give satisfaction to all the demands of the Bulgarian Government, as stated in my above mentioned despatch. It was to be hoped, however, that such satisfaction would not long be delayed. It would be quite useless for them to act on this occasion as in the case of the Istib massacres, when only two tzigans were condemned to a ridiculously inadequate term of imprisonment. The punishment should be exemplary and a few soldiers and gendarmes ought to be shot as a warning to others. His Excellency had also subsequently asked for an indemnity to be paid to the families of the victims.

M. Guèchoff continued that, although public feeling still ran high, he sincerely hoped that he would be able to keep it within bounds. There was to be a meeting the following day (yesterday) but he was of opinion that it would act as a safety valve to the popular excitement. What preoccupied the Government most, His Excellency said, was the solution of the Albanian Question, for, with all his love for peace and his desire to continue the friendly attitude he had adopted towards Turkey since coming into power, there was one circumstance which, should it follow this massacre, would compel him to a diametrical change of policy, namely if the Porte accorded to the Albanians any political concessions whatever tending to autonomy—e.g., the appointment of a Governor General, the delimitation of frontiers etc.—the Albanians were very grasping, they claimed the greater part of the four Vilayets of Janina, Kossovo, Monastir and Salonica. If any such concessions were granted to the Albanians and similar ones were withheld from the Macedonians, there would be such an uproar among the latter, followed by acts of violence on the part of various organizations to provoke massacres, and the consequent indignation of the people in the country that no Bulgarian Government would be able to resist the pressure. It was not that he did not wish the Albanians to obtain reforms and privileges, but what they got the Macedonians ought to have also, otherwise the danger to the peace could not be over-estimated. M. Guèchoff expressed gratification at the news that

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 603-4, No. 607.]

had been communicated to him by the Russian Minister that the Representatives of the Triple Entente were to make strong representations to the Porte on the subject of the massacre.

To revert to the fears of the Bulgarian Government respecting the grant of privileges to the Albanians tending to autonomy, it appears that the Bulgarian Minister at Constantinople had already spoken on the subject to M. Bompard and to the Marquis of Pallavicini, and that the latter's answers had appeared to him evasive and suspicious. M. Guèchoff has also been informed that 300 Albanians from the south are in Corfu and that they propose holding a congress at Argyrokastro where they intend to formulate their claims. His Excellency has called the attention of the Greek Minister here to the Corfu meeting. It is hardly necessary to point out the anxiety caused in Bulgaria as well, doubtless, as in Servia and Greece, by the success of the Albanian revolt, these three States would view the autonomy of Albania as a fatal blow to their aspirations. They wish to see Albania remain a thorn in the side of Turkey—a source of weakness—and not become a semi-independent Mahommedan State, a strong pillar of the Empire.

I hear from a reliable source that M. Guèchoff was considerably put out at being forced to allow the publication of the inflammatory leading article in the semi-official "Mir," extracts of which I quoted in my despatch No. 74 of the 10th instant,⁽³⁾ and also at being obliged to make an appeal to the Powers lest these two facts should be interpreted as indicating a change of policy on the part of the Bulgarian Government, but he was compelled to do something to satisfy public opinion. As it is feeling is still running high. M. Guèchoff and General Nikyphoroff, the Minister of War have received threatening anonymous letters, and it is said that King Ferdinand has also received similar missives.

To conclude M. Guèchoff's love for peace is easily explained; he understands the risk and danger to Bulgaria should she attempt any action against Turkey, and he fully realises the earnestness of the Great Powers, and especially that of Russia, in their reiterated counsels of peace.

A copy of this despatch will be sent to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

(³) [*v. supra*, pp. 603-4, No. 607.]

No. 615.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Eduard Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 34877/33672/12/44.

(No. 80.)

Sir,

Sofia, D. August 14, 1912.

R. August 19, 1912.

With reference to my immediately preceding despatch⁽²⁾ I have the honour to report that the first mass meeting of protestation arranged by an influential Committee composed of members of all parties with the exception of the Socialists, took place in Sofia yesterday afternoon.

Placards had been put up in the morning with war-like devices, as "War." "On to Adrianople." "Russia freed Bulgaria, Bulgaria must deliver her own fellow-countrymen." At five o'clock many thousands had assembled in the old cathedral square, from whence they proceeded through the town until they reached

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

the large square, opposite the Sobranie, in which stands the statue of the Tzar Liberator. Here speeches were made by representatives of all parties. The first speaker was M. Karastoyanoff, till quite recently mayor of Sofia, and a partisan of M. Guéchoff. Then followed a Democrat, Nationalist, Stamboulouist, Radoslavist and a Daneffist read out the final resolution: to the effect that "the meeting calls upon the Bulgarian Government to undertake any and every measure to secure the liberation of Macedonia and the Vilayet of Adrianople from the Turkish yoke, with the full knowledge that they have the unanimous support of the Bulgarian people." It was also decided to hand copies of the resolution to King Ferdinand and to the Government. The arguments prefatory to the resolution are enclosed herewith.

The crowd then returned to their starting point, and as they passed the Officers' Club there was spontaneous cheering which was heartily returned. The Royal palace also came in for a good share of Royal acclamation.

This meeting appears to have been by far the largest ever held in Sofia, the largest estimate being 30,000 persons. The proceedings throughout were most orderly. Similar meetings are being organised in the provinces for to-morrow, although a public holiday in honour of the twenty-fifth anniversary of King Ferdinand's accession, and for Sunday next. It is to be hoped, as I am inclined to think, that these meetings will relieve the overwrought nerves of the people.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

Enclosure in No. 615.

List of Arguments read to the Meeting

The following is the list of the points read out to the Meeting previously to the Resolution being put.

1. That in view of continual acts of provocation on the frontier and of the fact that those responsible, instead of being punished, are rewarded.
2. That to all steps hitherto taken by Bulgaria the Ottoman Government have responded in a dilatory manner with falsehoods and insults.
3. That since the establishment of the Constitution in Turkey former insurrectionaries and Chiefs of Bands, who had laid down their arms and returned to their loyalty to the Turkish Government, have been treacherously exterminated.
4. That while the Bulgarian population was cruelly disarmed the Ottoman Government distributed arms to the Turkish inhabitants and encouraged the formation of Turkish bands.
5. That Bulgarian Military Service in Turkey has been made the occasion of unheard-of excesses with a view to forcing Bulgarians to fly the country.
6. That the Turks have provoked wholesale massacres.
7. That whole villages and towns in Macedonia and in the Adrianople Vilayet have been wiped out or repopled with Mahommedans.
8. That the Ottoman Government, while killing off Bulgarians, gives every encouragement to Mahommedans and Albanians in the hope of effacing the Bulgarian character of Macedonia and the Adrianople Vilayet.
9. That the civilised world is horrified at the present reign of terror and anarchy in Turkey.
10. That the Bulgarian people feels itself touched to the quick and is of the opinion that inaction on the part of the Bulgarian Government in the circumstances constitutes a menace to the internal tranquillity of the country.

MINUTE.

From a telegram received to-day feeling seems less excited now, and the meeting to have had no important results.

A. P.
Aug[ust] 22, 1912.
H. N.
L. M.
E G

No. 616.

Sr R. Paget to Sr Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 34882/33470/12/44.

(No. 50.)

Belgrade, D. August 15, 1912.

Sir,

R. August 19, 1912.

Rumours concerning a Serbo-Bulgarian alliance have during the last few months been so constant, only to be as constantly denied, that the announcement recently telegraphed by the St. Petersburg correspondent of the "Times" that the existence of such an alliance is now admitted in St. Petersburg has caused comparatively little stir in Belgrade.

Only two newspapers the "Piedmont" and the "Srpska Zastava," have as yet written at any length upon the subject. I have the honour to enclose a summary of the views which they express⁽²⁾ and which may be interesting as undoubtedly representing the prevailing feeling in Belgrade.

Monsieur Yovanovitch the Minister for Foreign Affairs whom I saw yesterday again categorically denied to me that any Treaty of alliance is in existence but he admitted there had been pourparlers and that the bases for a Treaty were more or less settled but the old difficulty of rival claims in Macedonia was very difficult to get over.

I then said that besides the rumours of a Serbo-Bulgarian alliance, one often heard mention of an alliance between Bulgaria and Austria supposed to have been concluded some twelve years ago and I should be glad to know what he thought of this report as of course the existence of an Austro-Bulgarian alliance would scarcely be compatible with a Serbo-Bulgarian alliance concerning which he had just told me there had been pourparlers. Monsieur Yovanovitch replied that very possibly an arrangement between Bulgaria and Austria may have been in existence up to the time of Bulgaria's declaration of independence but he scarcely thought since that time. He pointed out that the object of both Bulgaria and Austria is Salonica and the former would be far more likely to attain her object by an alliance with Serbia than by any arrangement with Austria. It had been stated that the basis of such an arrangement was the partition of Serbia but this seemed altogether too cold-blooded and preposterous to be believed.

As will be seen from the summary I enclose,⁽²⁾ everyone is not, however, as confident as Monsieur Yovanovitch and there appears to be an uncomfortable feeling that if a Serbo-Bulgarian alliance has been concluded Serbia has in some way or another been "done." The reason for this feeling is that the advantages of such an alliance to Bulgaria are not clear and—as the "Neue Freie Presse" remarks, Bulgaria and Serbia must have been influenced rather by desire for the goodwill of Russia than regard for their own interests. It looks as though through this alliance Bulgaria would merely succeed in unnecessarily attracting Austrian hostility.

Copy sent to Sofia.

I have, &c.

RALPH PAGET.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.]

MINUTE.

King Ferdinand is capable of anything, and it is quite possible he has concluded re-insurance treaties.

A. P.
Aug[ust] 24, 1912.
H. N.
L. M.
E. G.

No. 617.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 34375/4/12/44.
(No. 397.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 15, 1912.

The French Ch[argé] d'Aff[aires] told Sir L. Mallet on the 10th inst[ant] that the Turkish Amb[assado]r at Paris had enquired what was the significance of the agreement arrived at or conversations held between France, Russia and G[rea]t Britain which preceded the German Emperor's visit to the Baltic.

M. Briand had replied that France was interested in the maintenance of Turkish integrity and had neither entered into any agreement [n]or held any conversations which would in any way affect that interest.

If the Turkish Amb[assado]r at this Court asks a similar question the same answer will be given to him with the addition that the conversation related to possibilities of mediation by the Powers in the war and was of a purely negative character.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 618.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 93823/93672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 433.) R.

Foreign Office, August 15, 1912, 3.15 P.M.

Your telegram No. 279⁽²⁾: (Kochana incident).

I approve your proposed representations to the Porte.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Paris (by bag); to St. Petersburg, (No. 659); to Sofia, (No. 19); to Berlin, (No. 112); and to Vienna, (No. 88). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 605, No. 609.]

No. 619.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 34959/20939/12/38.

(No. 360.)

Sir,

Paris, D. August 17, 1912.

R. August 19, 1912.

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of an official communiqué which has been made to the Press in regard to the results of

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

M. Poincaré's interviews with Russian statesmen during the visit to Russia which he has just completed.

The leading article in this evening's issue of the "Temps," copy of which is also enclosed herein, shows some disposition to cavil at the abstract wording of the communiqué, but singles out three passages in it for special interpretation and commendation. Firstly the solidarity of the Alliance and, by implication, of the understanding between France, Russia and England. Secondly, the statement that the agreement between France and Russia is adapted progressively to all the necessities for which an alliance needs to provide. Finally, that the alliance is, and remains, a guarantee of peace and of the balance of power in Europe.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

Enclosure in No. 619.

Extracts from the *Temps* of August 18, 1912.

Les relations franco-russes et le voyage de M. Poincaré.

Le communiqué officiel.

Saint-Petersbourg, 17 août.

La note suivante a été communiquée simultanément hier soir de sources française et russe.

"Le président du conseil de la République française a eu, pendant son séjour à Saint-Petersbourg, plusieurs longs entretiens avec le président du conseil et le ministre des affaires étrangères du gouvernement impérial.

"Ces conversations ont été empreintes de la grande cordialité qui a toujours caractérisé les relations personnelles des hommes d'État russes et français.

"Elles ont en outre permis aux gouvernements des deux nations amies et alliées de traiter, dans un esprit de confiance absolue et de sincère amitié, toutes les grandes questions sur lesquelles ils ont coutume non seulement d'échanger des vues, mais de concerter pratiquement leur action.

"Les deux gouvernements ont constaté que l'accord est complet entre eux et que les liens qui unissent les deux nations n'ont jamais été plus solides.

"Ils ont reconnu une fois de plus que l'entente des deux pays amis et alliés, fondée sur des intérêts permanents, consacrée par des sentiments invariables et progressivement adaptée à toutes les nécessités que doit prévoir une alliance, est et demeure une garantie précieuse pour le maintien de la paix et de l'équilibre européen."

Après le Voyage.

M. Poincaré a quitté hier la Russie après un séjour bien rempli, que l'opinion française a suivi avec une attention sympathique. L'empereur et le gouvernement impérial n'ont rien négligé pour marquer le plaisir qu'ils avaient à recevoir l'homme d'État éminent qui représentait la France auprès d'eux. Leur hospitalité, pleine d'attentions délicates, a été vivement appréciée par la France amie et alliée.

Le communiqué, qui sert de conclusion à ce voyage, est comme tous les documents de ce genre, hérissé d'abstractions. Le difficile en pareille matière, c'est d'éviter les réminiscences et de ne pas se répéter. Nous avons sous les yeux la collection complète de cette littérature spéciale : ce qui nous aide à mieux apprécier le mérite des rédacteurs d'hier. Ils ne se sont pas bornés, et grâce leur en soient rendues, à nous dire que les liens entre la France et la Russie se sont resserrés. Ce resserrement, clause de style déconcertante, qui suppose, pour être possible, un

relâchement préalable, nous est, pour cette fois, épargné. Entre les lignes et à travers les mots, nous discernons un louable désir de résumer les derniers faits de l'histoire franco-russe. On aurait pu les mentionner. Mais ce n'est pas l'usage en diplomatie d'appeler les choses par leur nom. Vous souvient-il d'un *Billet du matin* de M. Jules Lemaître publié ici-même, il y a bien des années, sur les discours académiques? On y songe quand on lit un communiqué officiel.

Voici d'abord l'affirmation de l'alliance, distincte de l'entente: "Les grandes questions sur lesquelles les gouvernements des deux nations amies et alliées ont coutume non seulement d'échanger des vues, mais de concerter pratiquement leur action." Traduisez: depuis plusieurs mois, la Russie, la France et l'Angleterre se sont préoccupées de savoir ce qu'elles feraient solidairement en Orient, si tant est que l'occasion se présente d'y faire quelque chose. Conclusion? C'est une réponse solidaire qui accueillera la suggestion du comte Berchtold dont nous avons hier indiqué le caractère.⁽²⁾ Là-dessus, point de doute: car "l'accord est complet et les liens qui unissent les deux nations n'ont jamais été plus solides."

Pour que ces liens aient de la valeur dans la paix, il faut qu'ils en aient en cas de guerre. Nous apprenons donc avec satisfaction que "l'entente des deux pays est progressivement adaptée à toutes les nécessités que doit prévoir une alliance." En clair, ce langage chiffré signifie d'abord que la convention navale est venue opportunément compléter la convention militaire de 1892, ensuite que les deux pays ont examiné la situation militaire qui résulte du renforcement de l'armée allemande. Soit en matière d'effectifs, soit en matière de stationnement, soit en matière de doublement de voies, soit en matière d'écartements de rails, il y a beaucoup à faire en France et en Russie. Nous n'espérons pas qu'on communiquât au public les décisions prises. Mais la forme catégorique du résumé abstrait qui en est donné constitue l'engagement de les prendre. C'est parfait.

Ainsi conçue, "fondée sur des intérêts permanents, consacrée par des sentiments invariables, . . . l'alliance est et demeure une garantie pour le maintien de la paix et de l'équilibre européen." Voilà deux fois en deux mois, à Port-Baltique et à Saint-Petersbourg, qu'on mentionne l'équilibre. Qu'on le mentionne, c'est bien. Qu'on s'en pénètre: ce sera mieux. Armements, alliances, ententes peuvent se développer et se fortifier, sans que nul s'en alarme, si la notion d'équilibre est dans les esprits comme elle est dans les faits. M. Poincaré a tenu à s'assurer que l'alliance franco-russe était à même de produire son maximum d'effet utile. Il faut lui en savoir très grand gré: car dans les années précédentes, des fautes avaient été commises par omission, qui demandaient à être réparées. Il s'y est employé avec un plein succès.

(2) [*v. infra*, p. 618, *Ed. note.*]

No. 620.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35871/20989/12/38.

(No. 256.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. August 18, 1912.

R. August 26, 1912.

Though Monsieur Poincaré's visit to Russia has not achieved any sensational result, such as the European Press seems to have anticipated, it has nevertheless been an unqualified success and has served to consolidate the Alliance by bringing the Ministers who control the foreign policy of the two countries into direct personal contact and by enabling them to discuss unreservedly the general political situation. As a result of this exchange of views, the two Governments now find themselves

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

in complete agreement on all questions of foreign policy; while the two Ministers have learnt to regard each other with sympathy and confidence. This personal element—a no unimportant factor in international politics—had hitherto been lacking; and its absence may, perhaps, account for the occasional misunderstandings that have arisen between Paris and St. Petersburg during the past six months.

Monsieur Poincaré's conduct of foreign affairs has not always commended itself to Monsieur Sazonoff. The latter was disappointed at the lukewarm support which his mediation proposals received at Paris, and was inclined to reproach Monsieur Poincaré with having, by what he considered an injudicious handling of the Franco-Italian incident last Spring, undone all the good work that Monsieur Barrère had accomplished during his long residence at Rome. On the other hand, Monsieur Sazonoff's attitude towards Germany was regarded at Paris with considerable misgivings and even with suspicion. The negotiations initiated by the French Government with the Cabinets of London and St. Petersburg, on the eve of the meeting of the two Emperors at Port Baltic, were but the indirect expression of this feeling of mistrust and evoked no little resentment here, on account of the want of confidence which they implied in Russia's loyalty to her ally. These misunderstandings have now been cleared up. Monsieur Poincaré, my French colleague tells me, carries away from his conversations with the Emperor, Monsieur Kokovtsoff, and Monsieur Sazonoff the conviction that in spite of the friendly relations which Russia desires to maintain with Germany there is not the least danger of her engaging in a serious flirtation with that Empire, and that though both the Emperor and his Government are most anxious to prevent a rupture of the peace, they are determined to push on their military and naval preparations so as to be prepared for all eventualities.

Monsieur Sazonoff, on the other hand, has spoken to me in the highest terms of Monsieur Poincaré and of the confidence with which His Excellency had inspired him. Monsieur Poincaré, he remarked, was a strong man who would not shirk responsibilities when confronted with a serious situation, and he only trusted that His Excellency might be in office should we ever be threatened with a European crisis.

In a short conversation which I had with Monsieur Sazonoff immediately after Monsieur Poincaré's departure, His Excellency told me that no new agreement had been signed by them, with the exception of an exchange of notes ratifying the Naval Convention that had been concluded at Paris between Prince Lieven and the Chief of the French Naval General Staff. His Excellency said nothing as regarded the scope of that Convention, but remarked that now that Russia possessed the Naval General Staff that was created two years ago, it had been thought advisable to arrange for a periodical exchange of views between its Chief and the head of the French Naval General Staff.

From what I have learnt of what passed in the course of Monsieur Sazonoff's conversations with Monsieur Poincaré, I gather that the latter has exercised a moderating influence as regards Russia's policy in the Near East. Monsieur Sazonoff was at one moment inclined to encourage the grant of autonomy to Albania as likely to pave the way for some equivalent concessions on the side of Macedonia. He argued that a contented Macedonia would deprive Bulgaria of any pretext for intervention and that we ought therefore to endeavour to induce the Porte to inaugurate serious reforms in that province. Monsieur Poincaré, on the other hand, held that we must restrict our efforts to maintaining the existing status quo in the Balkans, and that to encourage the idea of Albanian autonomy would be to unroll the whole Eastern Question.

As regards the Straits Monsieur Sazonoff, I am told, assured Monsieur Poincaré that he had no intention of raising this question at present. The discussions on China are said to have dealt chiefly with the question of the loan, about which, as Monsieur Poincaré remarked to me, our three Governments were already in complete agreement. I am not aware as to what was said about railways in Asia Minor; but

I know that the Russian Government are anxious that those of which French Companies hold the concessions should not be proceeded with too fast, so as to allow Russia time to complete her strategic railways in the Caucasus.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

MINUTES.

It would be interesting to learn the terms of the Naval Convention.

It would be best if the French and Russian G[overnmen]ts volunteered it but a good opportunity might be found for broaching the subject, after the question of the exchange of naval information is settled.

L. M.

We must wait for the present.

E. G.

No. 621.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

St. Petersburg, August 22, 1912.

Poincaré's visit was a great success. He made a most excellent impression on everyone with whom he came in contact; and the Emperor, according to all accounts, seems to have accorded him the most cordial reception. To my mind the most important result of the visit has been the personal rapprochement between him and Sazonow, which will undoubtedly tend to facilitate the smooth working of the Alliance. Hitherto they have not always seen eye to eye on all matters, nor had either of them an implicit confidence in the other. All this has now been set right: and Sazonow expressed to me the earnest hope that Poincaré would long remain at the head of affairs in France, as he was the man we required should a real crisis arise. . . .⁽²⁾

Ever your's,

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. VI of 1912.]

⁽²⁾ [The rest of this letter describes the various social functions held in M. Poincaré's honour.]

CHAPTER LXXVII.

COUNT BERCHTOLD'S INITIATIVE,
AUGUST—OCTOBER 1912.

[*ED NOTE*.—On August 13 telegrams were sent by Count Berchtold to St Petersburg, Berlin, London, Paris, Constantinople, and Bucharest giving instructions for verbal communication to be made to the Powers. The Austro-Hungarian *chargé d'affaires* at London, Count Karl Trauttmansdorff, called at the Foreign Office on the following day to carry out these instructions (*cp infra*, pp. 628-9, No. 640). For Count Berchtold's telegram, *v. Ö.-U. A.*, IV, pp. 339-40, No. 3687.]

No. 622.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 34894/34894/12/44.

(No. 181.)

Sir,

Marienbad, D. August 15, 1912.

R. August 19, 1912.

I have the honour to inform you that the "Neue Freie Presse" and certain other Vienna papers publish to-day a piece of information, which has the appearance of being inspired, concerning a proposal of Count Berchtold for an exchange of views between the Powers with regard to the situation in Turkey.⁽²⁾

The statement in question runs as follows:—

"The situation in Turkey has visibly improved during the last few days. The new Turkish Cabinet as well as public opinion in Turkey has realized that the policy of centralization has ended in a complete fiasco and that the salvation of Turkey is to be sought on other lines. It is characteristic of the situation that it was the army, the most national part of the population, which pointed out the necessity for an understanding with the Albanians.

"This is a cause of lively satisfaction to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, because it proves the soundness of the advice which it has given to Turkey for years past, and Austria-Hungary's attitude is further justified by the fact that the demands formulated at the meeting of Albanians at Prishtina were conceived in a very moderate tone. It appears also that the Turkish Government have already agreed to them in principle. The immediate future of Turkey could be regarded with a feeling of the greatest security were it not that there is always a certain danger, proved by past experience, that a Turkish Government, which has started in the right direction, may later become unstable and give ground to the assertion that the lack of unity among the different races of the Empire and the mistrust which the success of one causes in the others make it impossible for a Turkish Government to continue on the path on which it has entered.

"It therefore seems important at the present juncture that all those who take an interest in the welfare of Turkey and in the maintenance of peace in the Balkan Peninsula should join together to exercise special activity, firstly in strengthening the Porte in its well-meant efforts and secondly in exercising influence on the Balkan nations in order that they may not stand in one another's way in realizing their demands, which are for the most part reconcilable with the authority of the Turkish Empire, and may thereby render possible for the Porte a policy of adaptation to actual racial conditions in Turkey.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [For the general situation up to October 8, *cp. Ö.-U. A.*, IV, pp. 339-579, Nos. 3687-4003.]

"We have reason to believe that Count Berchtold, following this train of thought, intends to take the initiative and suggest an exchange of views between the Powers in the hope of attaining the objects above described, which are in the interests of Turkey herself and of the Balkan States as well as of the other Powers.

"It is clear that in order to bring about peace between Italy and Turkey, the position of the Turkish Government in its own country must be strengthened so that it may be able to restore order at home. It would then be able, in full possession of its authority, to carry out its intentions with regard to the conclusion of peace without fearing that the opposition would make its pacific tendencies the object of fresh agitations."

The "Neue Freie Presse" publishes a leading-article on the subject of the above information in which it points out that Austria-Hungary is the only Power which wants nothing from Turkey. Russia desires the opening of the Dardanelles to her warships: Italy the sovereignty over Tripoli. France is largely bound to support Russia. England contests the rights of Turkey to the control of the terminus on the Persian Gulf of the Bagdad Railway, and Germany's policy feels the weight of her great interests in that undertaking. And yet, in spite of her political disinterestedness, by her geographical position Austria-Hungary is the Power most nearly affected by the internal troubles of Turkey. And for that reason Count Berchtold invites the European Powers to support Turkey by mutual understanding, in her present difficulties and at the same time to assist the races in her Empire who are struggling for proper conditions of existence. Austria-Hungary desires to raise the credit of Turkey and to prolong the existence of a State which is only in appearance so near dissolution. The meetings of the Emperors at Baltic Port,⁽³⁾ says the "Neue Freie Presse," and Monsieur Poincaré's visit to St. Petersburg,⁽⁴⁾ have given fresh strength to the policy of the existing state of affairs in Europe and Count Berchtold's proposal is the fruit of that policy. The internal affairs of Turkey have the peculiarity of becoming external affairs for the rest of Europe and a crisis in that country cannot be allowed to threaten the general tranquillity. The "Neue Freie Presse" concludes by saying that Italy will be asked to join the other Powers in discussing the means for the preservation of Turkey and that if the Powers take counsel as to Albania and Macedonia they will not be able to ignore the question of Tripoli; for this reason it is probable that the proposed exchange of views will lead to direct peace negotiations.

It is too early as yet to form an opinion as to the scope of Count Berchtold's proposal or as to the exact form which it will assume, but it is interesting to note that he has to-day gone to Ischl to see the Emperor, probably for the purpose of discussing the projected step which the Austro-Hungarian Government is supposed to be about to take.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

⁽³⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 417, No. 433, and *note* (1); p. 419, No. 437.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 606, No. 610, and *note* (2).]

No. 623.

Note communicated by French Chargé d'Affaires, August 15, 1912.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35381/34661/12/44.

Ambassade de France à Londres.

Démarche du Chargé d'Affaires d'Autriche-Hongrie à Paris.

Le Comte Berchtold s'inquiète de l'agitation propagée en Bulgarie, en Serbie et en Grèce par la perspective de privilèges donnés aux Albanais et il propose aux Grandes Puissances d'entrer en pourparlers avec le Cabinet de Vienne en vue :

1° de conseiller à la Sublime Porte l'adoption d'une politique de *décentralisation progressive*, qui procurerait aux nationalités chrétiennes les garanties que ces nationalités peuvent légitimement réclamer.

2° d'agir auprès des États Balkaniques pour qu'ils attendent pacifiquement les résultats de cette politique.

M. Briand a répondu que la France avait comme principal but politique en Orient le maintien de la paix générale et du statu quo : qu'il était heureux de se trouver sur ce point en conformité de vues avec le Cabinet de Vienne, et qu'il étudierait la suggestion de Comte Berchtold.

Londres, le 15 août, 1912.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this note was sent to the Director of Military Operations v. also *infra*, pp. 632-3, No. 645, for communication to Paris.]

No. 624.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*Sofia, August 16, 1912.*

F.O. 34659/26948/12/44.

D. 4 P.M.

Tel. (No. 24.)

R. 4 P.M.

King of Bulgaria yesterday assured French and Russian Ministers of his pacific intentions expressing his unwillingness to act in any way contrary to the desires of the Powers.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Constantinople (as No. 438).]

No. 625.

Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*Cettinje, August 16, 1912.*

F.O. 34662/32869/12/44.

D. 7-20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 11.) R.

R. 11 P.M.

Montenegrin Government inform me that, according to information just received, twenty people, including women and children, have been massacred on the Montenegrin side of the frontier near Treptshi and some thirty more made prisoners.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Constantinople (as No. 442); to Berlin (as No. 114); to St. Petersburg (as No. 665); to Paris (as No. 307); to Sofia (as No. 22). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 626.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Berlin, August 16, 1912.

F.O. 34665/34661/12/44.

D. 7.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 91.) R.

R. 9.30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 111 (Aug[ust] 15) Near East.⁽²⁾

Lord Granville informed Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to-day of instructions sent to His Majesty's representatives at Constantinople and Sophia. Under-Secretary of State said that they had received no reports regarding Kochana incident⁽³⁾ from Constantinople and only one very optimistic one from Sophia. He continued to give moderating counsels to Turkish and Bulgarian representatives here.

Austrian proposal as reported in newspapers was made to German Government on 14th August. Under-Secretary of State declared his conviction that Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs was moved by honest desire to secure peace and *status quo* in the Balkans and had no *arrière-pensée*; there was nothing new in the proposed exchange of views, as Cabinets had been doing so for weeks, but the present proposal had been made with rather a flourish of trumpets. He said that German Government would merely reply that they would be glad to exchange views and would not commit themselves further. (End of R.)

(Confidential.)

French chargé d'affaires was told by Turkish Councillor of Embassy in conversation the other day that Turks were convinced of the good intentions of all the Great Powers except Austria, as to whose plans they were rather nervous.

(1) [This telegram was sent to Vienna (as No. 90); to Paris (as No. 306); to St. Petersburg (as No. 664); to Sofia (as No. 21); to Cettinje (as No. 15).]

(2) [Not reproduced. It instructed Sir E. Goschen to use all his influence in favour of moderation. *cp. infra*, pp. 636-7, No. 650.]

(3) [*v. supra*, pp. 603-6, Nos. 607-9; p. 608, No. 612; pp. 609-10, No. 614; p. 613, No. 618; *infra*, p. 625, No. 635; p. 646, No. 662.]

No. 627.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

St. Petersburg, August 16, 1912.

F.O. 34661/34661/12/44.

D. 8.5 P.M.

Tel. (No. 291.)

R. 9.49 P.M.

I gather from the language held to me this afternoon by the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs that his Excellency is not very pleased at initiative now being taken by Austria.

He said that he would have no objection to entering into an exchange of views with the Powers, though he doubted whether anything would come of it. It would not, however, be agreeable to Russia were Austria to try to "patronise" Balkan States.

Anything, moreover, in the shape of collective representations would be resented at Constantinople. Much, also, would depend on what was meant by decentralisation, and on whether it was to apply to Macedonia as well as to Albania. Austrian Ambassador, whom he was expecting, would no doubt be able to explain this, and if the explanations were satisfactory, and if Austrian proposal contained nothing objectionable, he would be prepared to instruct Russian Ambassador at Constantinople to give friendly counsels in the name of his Government, but not to take collective action.

(1) [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 305); to Vienna (as No. 39); to Berlin (as No. 119), to Cettinje (as No. 14); to Constantinople (as No. 439).]

No. 628.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*St. Petersburg, August 17, 1912.*

F.O. 34819/34661/12/44.

D. 8.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 293.)

R. 9.30 P.M.

My telegram No. 291 of Aug[ust] 16.⁽²⁾

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs has been instructed by Minister for Foreign Affairs, who has left St. Petersburg, to draft a telegram to Russian representatives in London and Paris giving views of Russian Government in regard to Austrian proposal, and inviting the opinion of the two Governments on the subject.

His Excellency told me that Minister for Foreign Affairs had expressed to the Austrian Ambassador his satisfaction that the proposal was based on the principles laid down in the exchange of views which took place between the two Governments in March 1910.⁽³⁾ His Excellency confirmed what Minister for Foreign Affairs said to me yesterday in regard to any collective action, and added that we ought to try and limit as much as possible the concessions to be made to Albanians if we were not in a position to secure anything for Macedonia. He also expressed opinion that representations which it was suggested should be made to Balkan States would do more harm than good, as they would infallibly expose us to the answer that only those who, like the Albanians, resorted to violence obtained any redress of their grievances. Russia, he added, was constantly giving counsels of moderation at Belgrade and Sophia.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Vienna (as No. 94); to Sofia (as No. 24); to Constantinople (as No. 448); to Cettinje (as No. 16); to Paris by bag.]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document]

⁽³⁾ [cp. *supra*, pp. 107-78, Chapter LXXII, *passim*.]

No. 629.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 34958/34661/12/44.

(No. 359.)

Paris, D. August 17, 1912.

Sir,

R. August 19, 1912.

The comments of the French press in regard to the proposals which the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs is understood to have made for an exchange of views between the Powers in regard to Near Eastern questions have been hitherto of a guarded nature as the significance of Count Berchtold's step was not fully understood.

The exact nature of the representation made verbally on the 14th instant to the French Government by the Austro-Hungarian Chargé d'Affaires⁽²⁾ has now become known and a leading article in yesterday evening's issue of the "Temps,"⁽³⁾ copy of which is transmitted to you herewith, subjects both the proposal itself and the manner in which it was made to a close examination, without however pretending to forecast what will be the attitude of the French Government towards it.

As regards the manner of the proposal, the return of Austria-Hungary to the system of collective action by all the Great Powers is cordially welcomed. As far as the substance of the proposals is concerned, namely, that Turkey should be advised to proceed with measures of progressive decentralization in favour of all the

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 620, No. 623.]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced.]

nationalities of the Ottoman Empire, and that counsels of moderation should be urged on the Balkan States, general approval is expressed.

An article, somewhat similar in tone, copy of which I have the honour also to enclose herein,⁽¹⁾ is contributed to today's issue of the "Figaro" by its foreign Editor. In the view of M. Recouly the word "decentralization" is the pith of the Austrian proposal and he sees in it a blow to the policy which the Committee of Union and Progress have hitherto pursued with such unsatisfactory results, and also perhaps, a new name for the old "Macedonian reforms." He recalls all the grave problems with which these reforms were associated in the past and in particular the difficulty of securing any effective reform without impairing Turkish sovereignty.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

(¹) [Not reproduced.]

No. 680.

Note communicated by French Chargé d'Affaires, August 17, 1912.

F.O. 35880/34661/12/44.

Ambassade de France à Londres.

Proposition du Comte Berchtold.⁽¹⁾

Les Gouvernements Français et Russe sont d'accord pour penser qu'il est possible d'accepter la suggestion autrichienne et de donner, séparément et non collectivement, des conseils conformes à cette suggestion au Gouvernement Ottoman en même temps que l'on recommanderait le calme aux états Balkaniques.

17 août, 1912.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 620, No. 623.]

No. 681.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35198/32869/12/44.

Constantinople, D. August 19, 1912, 5.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 304.)

R. August 20, 1912, 11 A.M.

Cettinje telegram No. 11.⁽²⁾

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] asserts very positively that, as at Maikovatz, incident near Berana was deliberately provoked by Montenegrin Gov[ernmen]t whom he accuses of bad faith throughout. While General Voukotich had been holding the joint enquiry about the Maikovatz affair, King had secretly mobilised and sent a considerable force with artillery to neighbourhood of Berana under another general of less conciliatory disposition. It was then pretended that Christians had been attacked by Moslems and Montenegrins crossed the frontier to protect them, this pretext was *primâ facie* most improbable as the Moslems formed a very (? gr[ou]p om[it]t[e]d: small) minority in that district. Montenegrin troops had attacked and captured four Turkish blockhouses and were still besieging four others; the Turks had lost over 50 soldiers killed. Turkey had every desire to be conciliatory but in face of this aggression Gov[ernmen]t thought that moderation could be carried too far. Accordingly Javid had been dispatched to Berana with a sufficient force to guard the frontier but he had strict orders not to encroach on Montenegrin territory. I said that if guarding the frontier meant retaking the blockhouses a very

(¹) [This telegram was sent to Cettinje (as No. 90); to St. Petersburg (as No. 682); to Paris (as No. 316); to Vienna (as No. 102). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 620, No. 625.]

dangerous situation would be created as it would involve a combat on a comparatively large scale between the troops of the two countries and that a state of war would be brought perilously near. H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] were very apprehensive of the possible consequences which might result for Turkey elsewhere and I urged that it would be wiser to instruct Djavid Pasha to content himself with containing the Montenegrin forces in their present position. H[is] E[xc]ellency seemed impressed with this consideration but hoped that similar counsels of moderation would be given at Cetinje. I said that H[is] M[ajesty's] R[ep]resentative had similar instructions to my own.

Djavid Pasha is not the officer who conducted the operations in the Liuma valley in 1910.

No. 682.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35235/34661/12/44.

Therapia, D. August 19, 1912, 6.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 306)

R. August 20, 1912, 12.30 P.M.

Albania: Austrian proposals.

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] said that it was not clear what was intended by decentralisation; if it was to be political the Porte could not entertain a suggestion tending towards a separate régime of Albania, but if it was merely administrative it was in so far unobjectionable that administrative decentralisation was compatible with and provided for by the Constitution of Turkey.

His Excellency showed no sign of resenting Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs]'s step but appeared to regard it as well meant officiousness that would not lead to anything.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Cetinje (as No. 23); to Sophia (as No. 30), to Paris (as No. 318); to St. Petersburg (as No. 684); to Berlin (as No. 119); to Vienna (as No. 104). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 683.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey. ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35142/33672/12/44.

Sofia, D. August 19, 1912.

Tel. (No. 25.)

R. August 20, 1912, 10 A.M.

Your telegram no. 18 of Aug[ust] 15.⁽²⁾

As far as I can ascertain none of my colleagues have received special instructions to give counsels of moderation now. In view of reiterated pacific assurances given by Government such counsels would be untimely. But I took an opportunity to-day to say to M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that I was sure that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would have learnt with gratification the pacific assurances given by the King of the Bulgarians to Russian and French Ministers for he must know how ardently H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] desired peace in the Balkans.⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 311); to St. Petersburg (as No. 677); to Vienna (as No. 97); to Constantinople (as No. 453). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It informed Mr. Barclay that representations had been made to the Porte, and instructed him to urge moderation if his colleagues were similarly instructed. (F.O. 33827/33672/12/44.)]

⁽³⁾ [Approved by Sir Edward Grey. Telegram to Mr. Barclay, No. 28 of August 20. (F.O. 35142/33672/12/44.)]

No. 634.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35143/34661/12/44.

Sofia, D. August 19, 1912.

Tel. (No. 26.)

R. August 20, 1912, 10 A.M.

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] to-day said to me that Austrian proposal as stated in press was too vague for him to express an opinion on its merits. If however the execution of Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin should be evolved from it the Macedonians would be doubtless quite satisfied consequently Bulgaria also.

His Excellency showed anxiety with regard to threatened movement of Albanians in the direction of Salonika.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 312), to St Petersburg (as No. 678); to Constantinople (as No. 454); to Vienna (as No. 98); to Berlin (as No. 117); to Cetinje (as No. 18). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 635.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Barclay.

F.O. 34794/33672/12/44.

(No. 26.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 19, 1912.

The Bulgarian Minister called at this Office on the 12th inst[ant] and asked Sir L. Mallet to draw my attention to the Kotehana incident⁽¹⁾ and to beg me to use my influence at Constantinople to induce Turkey to adopt a reasonable attitude.

Sir L. Mallet said that H[is] M[ajesty's] Chargé d'Aff[aires] there had already made representations to the Porte, and added that I hoped that the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t would maintain an attitude of calm and moderation.

M. Majaroff expressed his thanks for Mr. Marling's action and said that his Gov[ernmen]t were sincerely desirous of a peaceful termination of the affair.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 621, No. 626, and note ⁽³⁾.]

No. 636.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35276/34661/12/44.

(No. 377.)

Sir,

Berlin, D. August 19, 1912.

R. August 21, 1912.

The reception by the German Press of the announcement of Count Berchtold's invitation to the Powers to exchange views on the situation in Turkey and the Balkans has been distinctly favourable, though one noticed at first the usual hesitation of the German journalist to commit himself before he can get a lead from his semi-officially inspired colleagues. However it was announced that Germany had given her assent to Count Berchtold's proposal on the 16th instant and the "Nord-deutsche" declared yesterday that the proposal had been received in Germany with friendly welcome, so we may now expect it to be discussed with more enthusiasm.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]
[5092]

Up till now the line taken by most of the papers is that Count Berchtold's suggestion that the Powers should exchange views on the subject is obviously an excellent one and one that no Power can well do otherwise than gladly accept; but that it is to be presumed that Count Berchtold has some more or less definite programme in view on the lines indicated in the Austrian and Hungarian semi-official press, and that any such programme must be most carefully considered and that Germany must not allow herself to be led into any sort of intervention, which has been attempted before with such unsuccessful results.

The Cologne Gazette, in an article of some length on the 17th instant, points out that there have been times when the Bulgarian statesmen could safely count on the support at Constantinople of some at least of the Great Powers, but that now things are different: there is so much inflammable material in the Balkan Peninsula which any stray spark may kindle into a conflagration, the limits of which are incalculable, that all the Great Powers without exception are sincerely and anxiously determined to do all in their power to prevent such a conflagration; Austria-Hungary by her geographical position is the first to feel this and it is for this reason that Count Berchtold has taken the lead in an attempt to find a programme which can satisfy Turkey herself, the various mixed nationalities in her European dominions and the independent Balkan States. Count Berchtold, the writer remarks, has expressly stated that he is not thinking of intervention and everyone will agree with him there, but the proposal he has sketched of encouraging Turkey in the policy of decentralisation which her present negotiations with the Albanians seem to indicate, is one which bears in it hopeful seeds of success.

Lord Granville saw the Under Secretary of State of the Foreign Office on the 16th instant, who had, however, very little to say on the subject: he said that the communication on the 14th of the Austrian proposal had come as a complete surprise to them: there did not seem to be anything very new in the suggestion that the Powers should exchange views as they had been doing so for months past, but Germany would of course reply that she would gladly join in such an exchange of views. Herr Zimmermann did not discuss the programme as sketched in the papers but expressed his sincere hope that there would be no talk of intervention—"We do not want to begin that business again." He said he was absolutely convinced that Count Berchtold was induced to take this step by the sole and sincere desire to maintain peace and the status quo in the Balkans and that he had no *arrière-pensée* whatever in the direction of material gains for Austria.

On the 17th the Bulgarian Minister called on Lord Granville, evidently in the hopes of hearing something of the views of His Majesty's Government on the subject. Lord Granville was of course unable to give him any information but M. Gueshow discussed the situation very frankly. He too remarked that there was nothing new or interesting in the mere invitation to the Powers to exchange views—the point was to know the programme on which the views were to be exchanged. If the Powers decided to give good and restraining advice at Sofia, Belgrade, &c.,—"eh bien, nous en savons quelquechose"—they received good advice every day. Lord Granville asked whether a policy of decentralisation might not approach very nearly to grants of autonomy and whether in that case the temptation to Bulgaria would not be very great to enter into closer relations with an autonomous Macedonia than would seem desirable from the Turkish point of view. M. Gueshow said there was decentralisation and decentralisation and a great deal depended on what was meant by the word; as far as temptation to Bulgaria was concerned that always existed; the ideal which all Bulgarians cherished was a great homogeneous Bulgarian State, but, though of course there were many more fiery spirits, the saner statesmen hoped to attain that ideal eventually by the peaceful and natural development of events. Returning to the question of decentralisation M. Gueshow thought that with care and prudence it ought not to be very difficult so to arrange things as to secure the rights of all the minorities—for instance he would suggest that in every town or district the election of the local council, or whatever it was, should not be left to chance but that it should

be laid down what proportion of members each nationality should elect according to their respective numbers in that particular locality. M. Gueshew hopes to go on leave in a few days, which shows that he does not look upon the situation as very threatening, though he said that he only hoped to go and could not be sure that events would allow his departure.

I have, &c.

(For the Ambassador),

GRANVILLE.

No. 637.

Sir Edward Grey to Count de Salis ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35198/32869/12/44.

Tel. (No. 21.)

Foreign Office, August 20, 1912, 2.30 P.M.

Mr. Marling's tel[egram] No. 304 of Aug[ust] 19⁽²⁾: Montenegro frontier.

You should in conjunction with your colleagues strongly urge upon the Montenegrin G[overnmen]t that Montenegrin troops should at once be withdrawn from Turkish territory and from the neighbourhood of the frontier and use all your influence in favour of moderation.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Constantinople (No. 456)]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 623-4, No. 631.]

No. 638.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

F.O. 35198/32869/12/44.

Tel. (No. 455.)

Foreign Office, August 20, 1912, 2.30 P.M.

Your tel[egram] [No.] 304 (of 19 Aug[ust])⁽¹⁾: Montenegro frontier.

I approve your language.

You may say that I trust that orders will be sent to the Turkish troops on no account to cross the frontier—and to withdraw from its neighbourhood.

I am giving similar advice at Cetinje.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 623-4, No. 631]

No. 639.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35320/34661/12/44.

Constantinople, D. August 20, 1912, 11.15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 313.)

R. August 21, 1912, 10 A.M.

Albania.

My telegram No. 306 of Aug[ust] 19.⁽²⁾

Since I saw M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] yesterday morning His Excellency has expressed himself to the Russian and French Ambassadors in terms of decided condemnation of Austrian proposals.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 324); to St. Petersburg (as No. 689); to Berlin (as No. 120); to Vienna (as No. 109); to Sofia (as No. 333); to Constantinople (as No. 261).]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 624, No. 632.]

Russian Ambassador agrees that any scheme whatever of decentralisation involves delimitation of area which while in itself a very thorny problem would, by creating a political Albania, result eventually in fostering aspirations for autonomy which at present scarcely exist. The Austrian suggestion of holding out hopes that similar decentralisation may be extended to other parts of European Turkey he considers as unwise and impracticable as the conditions are quite different to those in Albania.

But if a privileged situation is created for Albania demands for similar treatment will be made by other races and a dangerous situation will be created. He expressed these views to M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs], and is reporting in this sense to St. Petersburg.

French Ambassador also condemns Austrian proposals as ill considered and ill timed.

Austrian Ambassador was not consulted by his Government as to the proposals and has received no instructions to mention them to the Porte.

Confidential.

Both Russian and French Ambassadors agree in believing that Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs]' proposals were made with the object of creating an autonomous Albania.

MINUTES.

It looks as if C[oun]t Berchtold had launched his idea from a vague desire to do something, rather than in order to bring about Albanian autonomy. However, until we have the actual proposals all criticism is mere speculation.

A. P.

Aug[ust] 21, 1912.

I believe the view expressed in the last paragraph to be unjust, but I cannot see so far that the proposals are helpful and they may be dangerous.

H. N.

If his object is autonomy for Albania, it does not seem likely to be furthered by the step which he has taken. Perhaps the offensive word "decentralization" was used vaguely in which case there will be no difficulty in eliminating it if anything is said at Constantinople. The next step must come from C[oun]t Berchtold.

L. M.

The concessions to the Albanians seem to have been accepted by the insurgents as satisfactory: if so the Albanian question is for the moment settled and does not provoke any question of autonomy.

The word "decentralization" is ambiguous. The Turks do not object to "administrative" as distinct from "political" decentralization.

Indeed "administrative decentralization" of some sort is necessary to give that elasticity to Turkish Gov[ernmen]t which is the opposite of the rigid policy of the late C[ommittee of] U[nion and] P[rogress] Turkish Governments that provoked the trouble in Albania by trying to pass a steam roller as I called it over the country.

E. G.

No. 640.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35075/34661/12/44.

(No. 49.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 20, 1912.

The Austrian Chargé d'Affaires called on the 14th inst[ant] and made to Sir L. Mallet an oral communication from the Austro-Hungarian M[inister for]

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

F[oreign] A[ffairs], which is also being made to the other Great Powers, in regard to the Balkans.⁽²⁾

Count Berchtold is of opinion that the crisis is not so acute as it was. The excitement in Bulgaria owing to the Kochana massacre, and the recrudescence of the Greek bands though very disquieting are perhaps natural in all the circumstances, and are possibly partly due to the impression that the Porte is considering the question of granting autonomy to Albania. Now the Porte does not, it appears, contemplate anything so drastic, but, so far as can be seen, proposes, merely to accord certain necessary reforms to those provinces, which are not asking for autonomy.

Count Berchtold is of opinion that the Porte should be encouraged by the Powers in this course, which he considers wise and prudent and more calculated to preserve peace in the Balkans than a more forward policy.

He asked for an expression of my views and whether I thought that anything should be said at Constantinople.

[I am, &c.

E. GREY.]

(2) [*cp. supra*, p. 618, *Ed. note.*]

[*ED NOTE.*—The despatch given above was based upon a minute by Sir L. Mallet, dated August 14, recording the interview which took place on the same day. The last two paragraphs of this minute are as follows.—

The communication seems very sensible, but we had better ascertain the views of France and Russia before answering and as you are away, there is no great hurry. As M. Sazonow contemplated a communication of much the same sort, he may be annoyed at the lead being taken out of his mouth and there may be something behind it.

Unless we hear anything, in the meantime, from Sir G. Buchanan, I would suggest telegraphing shortly the gist of this to him and to Sir F. Bertie, adding that you agree to the views expressed but think it would be sufficient to instruct the Ambassador at Constantinople to adopt a sympathetic and encouraging attitude to the Porte, without making any communiqué which might render the Porte liable to the accusation that it is being dictated to by the Powers.

L. M.

Aug[ust] 14.

Sir Edward Grey commented "I approve. E. G."

The proposals made in the last paragraph of Sir L. Mallet's minute resulted in the sending of telegrams to Sir F. Bertie (No. 309) and to Sir G. Buchanan (No. 667). Both were despatched at 2.30 p.m. on August 17. (F.O. 35075/34661/12/44.)

No. 641.

Memorandum communicated by Tewfik Pasha, August 20, 1912.

F.O. 36188/34661/12/44.

Le Sous Secrétaire d'État Austro-Hongrois a expliqué à l'Ambassadeur Ottoman à Vienne, que dans un esprit amical envers la Turquie et pour faciliter son œuvre réformatrice, le Comte Berchtold avait pensé ouvrir une conversation avec les autres Grandes Puissances en vue de les amener à déclarer d'une part que les petits États balkaniques devaient rester pacifiques et que d'autre part l'Europe entière est heureuse d'assister le Gouvernement Ottoman actuel dans l'application de son plan de décentralisation et de réformes en Turquie.

Le Gouvernement Impérial apprécie l'intention amicale dont le Gouvernement Austro-Hongrois veut lui donner une nouvelle preuve; mais il craint, à bon droit, que sa démarche mal comprise et interprétée en sens divers, et par les États balkaniques et par les populations Musulmanes et Chrétiennes de l'Empire Ottoman, ne dénature à leurs yeux les réformes libérales projetées par le Gouvernement Constitutionnel Ottoman. Il ne pourrait les appliquer efficacement que si elles sont présentées aux uns et aux autres entièrement libres et exemptes de toute suggestion étrangère. La Sublime Porte ajoute au surplus qu'aucune des dispositions prises par

elle à l'égard des Albanais ne peut être taxée de "décentralisation"; ce terme a été donc improprement employé dans la communication du Gouvernement Austro-Hongrois.

MINUTES.

Sir E. Grey.

Tewfik Pasha communicated to me today the appended pro-memoria respecting Count Berchtold's communication.

If this is all that Count Berchtold means to do, not much harm will come of his proposal. The word "decentralization" is the great stumbling block. Tewfik Pasha has mentioned this twice. The Turkish Government have no intention of proposing *political* decentralization and they fear that foreign intervention will make their task more difficult, instead of assisting them. A friendly communication made at Constantinople or perhaps here to Tewfik Pasha in the sense of the marked sentence⁽¹⁾ of the Turkish pro-memoria but omitting the word "decentralization" might satisfy Count Berchtold without exasperating the Turks. The sooner the conversation is over the better but as M. Sazonow has objected to saying anything to the Balkan States, perhaps we had better wait before suggesting this?

L. M.

August 20, 1912.

I think it would be best to make the communication verbally to Tewfik: he is a very wise and understanding medium of communication. I agree that nothing should be said about *political* decentralization and my own view of a communication would be to tell Tewfik verbally that both in Macedonia and Albania the new Régime (*i.e.*, the Committee of Union and Progress) gave rise to great discontent and complaints, that I believe the present Turkish Government sincerely wishes to redress these and that if it will do so and administer justly the Powers will give every encouragement and support and will then be able to use their influence effectively to keep the Balkan States quiet and to preserve peace or the *status quo*.

E. G.

Sir E. Grey.

I do not gather that you wish me to make any communication to Tewfik Pasha at once but to have it ready when the proper moment arrives.

The next move should come from Count Berchtold who, I suppose, will make some further proposal of a more precise character. M. Sazonow has objected to saying anything more to the Balkan States and this was an important part of Count Berchtold's communication.

I was discussing further developments with M. de Fleuriau yesterday and we agreed that we had done what was necessary for the present in responding to Count Berchtold's invitation—if we fire our shot into the Turks now, we shall have nothing more to do, if Count Berchtold approaches us again.

Perhaps we should wait a little and see how matters turn out?

L. M.

August 22, [19]12.

I agree that we should wait for the next move from Count Berchtold. We have promised to exchange views with him if he desires and it is for him to express his view and make his suggestion.

When he does so we can make the suggestion that I have written on the previous page of August 20,⁽²⁾ our contribution to the exchange of view with Count Berchtold. As I am to be in London on Monday I shall presumably be able to discuss all this with you before any action is required.

E. G.

23.8.12.

⁽¹⁾ [*i.e.*, *supra*, p. 629, "d'une part . . . en Turquie."]

* [Marginal note by Sir Edward Grey.] The Turks apparently do not object to speaking of administrative decentralization.

⁽²⁾ [*v.* above minute by Sir Edward Grey.]

No. 642.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35255/82869/12/44.

Tel (No. 327.)

Foreign Office, August 21, 1912, 2.30 P.M.

Inform Gov[ernmen]t that I am urging cessation of hostilities at Cetinje and moderation at Constantinople. As far as can be ascertained, the Montenegrins are the aggressors. I hope that the Gov[ernmen]t to which you are accredited will send similar instructions and use all their influence in a pacific sense.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Constantinople (No. 461); to Cetinje (No. 27); to Rome (No. 256); to St Petersburg (No. 697); to Berlin (No. 121); to Vienna (No. 112)]

No. 643.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*St. Petersburg, August 21, 1912.*

F.O. 35418/19/12/44.

D. 8.6 P.M.

Tel. (No. 298.)

R. 10 P.M.

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs (? informed me) confidentially that the Balkan States addressed an appeal to Russia not to forget claims for Christians in Macedonia when the opportune moment arrived.

This step he said was significant.

His Excellency gathers from the Turkish Ambassador that the projected reforms will apply to Albanians in four vilayets of Scutari, Janina, Kossovo, Monastir, which, according to the latter, are comprised in the term Albania. His Excellency is of opinion that we shall have to do something for the Macedonians, who will not be satisfied with vague promises for the future. He spoke pessimistically of the probable outcome of the Austrian proposals, which he evidently thinks will do more harm than good.

His Excellency said that reports which he had received as to an agreement having been arrived at between the Turks and Albanians were very conflicting. If the report was true there would be no need for the Powers to take action at Constantinople, but the recent doings of the Albanians, as well as the Turco-Montenegrin conflict, were causing him much preoccupation.

I told him of the instructions sent in your telegram No. 21 of Aug[ust] 20⁽²⁾ to Cetinje.

MINUTES.

Our reports about Albania are also very conflicting.

A. P.

August 22, 1912.

I think there is a great deal in what M. Neratoff says. It is clear that the Macedonians have as good a right to the benefit of reforms as their Albanian neighbours.

H. N.

Yes, but we shall defeat our object if we upset the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t. This is what M. Etter was instructed to tell me on the 20th.

L. M.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Cetinje (as No. 30); to Sofia (as No. 38); to Belgrade (as No. 2), to Vienna (as No. 117); to Berlin (as No. 122).]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 627, No. 687.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 35380/34661/12/44.

(No. 407.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 21, 1912.

The French Ch[argé] d'Aff[aires] left with Sir L. Mallet on the 17th inst[ant] a paper of which a copy is enclosed.⁽¹⁾

It does not seem to me to be necessary to take any action on this communication, and I propose to await a reply to my tel[egram] No. [309] of [the 17th August⁽²⁾] to your Excellency] in which I deprecate direct and formal representations to the Porte.

In my view it should be impressed on Turkey that if she will establish good Gov[ernmen]t and not repeat the errors of the previous administration the Powers will use all their influence to secure peace in the Balkans. If the Powers will agree to some communication of this kind to be made separately at Constantinople I should be prepared to instruct H[is] M[ajesty's] Rep[resentati]ve to join in such action.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [*v supra*, p. 623, No. 630.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced *cp supra*, p. 629, *Ed. note.*]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35381/34661/12/44.

(No. 408.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 21, 1912.

The French ch[argé] d'Aff[aires] communicated to Sir L. Mallet on the 15th inst[ant] a paper of which a copy is enclosed.⁽²⁾

It is a résumé of a communication made in Paris by the Austro-Hungarian Chargé d'Affaires, identical with that made here by his colleague on the 15th inst[ant].⁽³⁾

Count Trautmansdorff however, in the latter communication did not speak of "progressive decentralization" but of "reforms," only mentioning "decentralization" quite incidentally.

The reply of the French Acting M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] is non-committal.

The communication will probably excite the apprehensions of the Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs], as it is universally interpreted as intended to favour the idea of autonomy for the Christian provinces of Turkey.

Before reaching a definite conclusion on the subject I propose to await the result of M. Sazonow's conferences with M. Poincaré—the French Prime Min[iste]r and M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] but it appears at first sight that, though the policy is one with which H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] have sympathised, to press "decentralization" on the Porte at this juncture might seriously affect the stability of the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t, excite the chauvinism of the Turkish army and encourage aspirations in the Balkans which would probably lead to war.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v supra*, p. 620, No. 623.]

⁽³⁾ [Actually on 14th instant, *v supra*, pp. 628–9, No. 640; and *cp* p. 618, *Ed. note.*]

It ought not, however, in my opinion, [to] be difficult to frame a satisfactory reply when H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] have exchanged views and come to an understanding with France and Russia.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

No. 646.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

F.O. 35376/34661/12/44.

(No. 382.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 21, 1912.

The Turkish Amb[assado]r enquired of Sir L. Mallet on the 16th inst[ant] whether the Austro-Hungarian G[overnment] had made any proposals for an exchange of views with the Powers in respect of autonomy for Albania, as stated in the Press.

Sir L. Mallet replied that the Austro-Hungarian Ch[argé] d'Aff[aires], in the communication which he had made had certainly not gone so far as that. He had been instructed to say that the Austro-Hungarian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] viewed with satisfaction the intention of the Porte to grant extensive reforms, in the direction of decentralization, to Albania and thought that the Porte should be encouraged in this policy.

H[is] H[ighness] said that reforms were all very well and that he was heartily in favour of them but any talk of autonomy would be very dangerous as it would encourage similar aspirations all over the Balkans.

Sir L. Mallet said that as autonomy had not been mentioned by either Albanians or Austrians, there seemed no need for the newspapers to raise the point and that real reform for Albania which everyone wanted seemed a sufficiently large programme for the present.

In my view, what is wanted is good government with special arrangements suited to different districts, such as Albania, which is in effect what the Albanians ask for and there need be no talk of autonomy.

Tewfik Pasha has been informed that I approve what Sir L. Mallet said to him on this question.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

No. 647.

Mr. Vaughan to Sir Edward Grey.(¹)

F.O. 36894/34661/12/44.

(No. 58.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sinai, D. August 21, 1912.

R. September 2, 1912.

I asked Monsieur Maioreco, at his weekly reception yesterday whether he had formed any opinion of Count Berchtold's proposal to the Powers.

His Excellency told me that he considered it clever and astute. Since the death of Count Aehrenthal Austria-Hungary had not figured largely on the stage of European politics, and Count Berchtold's name was little heard. Germany and Russia had been in evidence at the meeting of the Emperors at Baltic port and France and again Russia owing to Monsieur Poincaré's visit to St Petersburg.

(¹) [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

Austria-Hungary doubtless felt that her influence in the Balkans was being absorbed by Russia. By his proposal to the Powers for an exchange of views Austria had once more come into the forefront and Count Berchtold's name was on everyone's lips.

Whatever the ultimate result might be, Monsieur Maioresco welcomed the proposal as he considered it would tend to the maintenance of peace. It would act as a stimulus to Turkey to come to terms with Italy and would exercise a restraining effect on the more excitable Balkan states. His Excellency assured me that the proposal was in no way connected with Count Berchtold's impending visit.

I asked the Greek Minister for his private opinion on the proposal and he said he thought it all depended on the attitude of Russia. She would no doubt agree but would not be likely to assist in furthering it. It also depended on whether Austria had any scheme underlying it. But Austria and Russia had already made proposals which had come to nothing. He was very pessimistic as to its ultimately resulting in any practical good. Decentralization was a very vague expression and to his mind was very near akin to autonomy which might mean paving the way for eventual absorption.

The American Minister told me that, from what he had heard, he gathered that Count Berchtold had made the proposal with a genuine desire to obtain information, and he himself thought it was at any rate an ingenious device for keeping the Balkan States, especially Bulgaria, where the war-feeling was very strong, quiet during the next two months until the snow came and rendered hostilities impossible.

I have, &c.

J. C. T. VAUGHAN.

P.S., August 26, 1912.—The story is being told that Count Berchtold, during his stay here, when questioned by someone as to what he meant by "decentralization," replied that he really did not know himself!

J. C. T. V.

No. 648.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35875/34661/12/44.

(No. 260.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. August 22, 1912.

R. August 26, 1912.

The first impression made on the Russian Government by Count Berchtold's proposal was one of annoyance at the initiative having been taken by Austria; and Monsieur Sazonow evidently feared that her intention was to pose as the patron of the Balkan States. When, however, the Austrian Ambassador made his official communication His Excellency betrayed no signs of annoyance and begged him to express to Count Berchtold his satisfaction at hearing that his proposals were based on the principles of the maintenance of the status quo and of the pacific development of the Balkan States, as on that basis he would be ready to enter into an exchange of views with the Powers. As he was to leave St. Petersburg on the following day His Excellency requested Monsieur Nératow to instruct the Russian Representatives at Paris and London to discuss the question with the French and British Governments.

From the language since held to me by Monsieur Nératow I gather that the Russian Government consider that the step which Count Berchtold has taken is both unwise and inopportune and that, far from allaying the threatening storm, it will only serve to provoke fresh disturbances. The Russian Government, His Excellency remarked, had been consistent in giving restraining counsels at Sofia and Belgrade; and there was no reason why they, as well as the other Powers, should

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

not continue to do so. But while the Albanians were to be appeased with far-reaching concessions, the Bulgarians and Serbs were to be kept quiet with vague promises of something being done for Macedonia in a dim and distant future. Under these circumstances they would not fail to draw the moral that nothing was to be gained by observing a correct attitude and that it was only those who had recourse to violent methods who ever obtained redress of their grievances. It appeared, moreover, from what the Turkish Ambassador had told him that the concessions which the Turks contemplated making to the Albanians would not be confined to what was commonly known as Albania, but would be extended to all the Albanian inhabitants of the four Vilayets of Scutari, Janina, Kossovo and Monastir which, according to Turkhan Pasha, were all comprised in the term Albania. Were this to be done and were the claims of the Greeks, Serbs and Bulgars in those Vilayets to be entirely overlooked a very serious situation might ensue and His Excellency, therefore, thought that, in spite of the difficulties which such a course presented, we must endeavour to obtain some satisfaction for the Macedonians. He mentioned as a significant [*sic*] fact that the Russian Government had already been appealed to by the Balkan States not to forget Macedonia when the opportune moment arrived.⁽²⁾

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

(²) [*cp. supra*, p. 631, No. 643.]

No. 649.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Paris, August 23, 1912.

F.O. 35654/19/12/44.

D. 6.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 102.)

R. 7.45 P.M.

French Minister for Foreign Affairs told me to-day that instructions which he has sent to French Ambassador at Constantinople are not to put pressure on the Porte, but that if it is spontaneously disposed to grant concessions to Albanians the French Government advise the Porte in a friendly way to consider whether it could not make similar concessions to other nationalities in Turkish Balkan provinces. French Minister for Foreign Affairs does not know precisely what are demands of the Albanians and what are the concessions to be made to them by Porte.

MINUTES.

The proposal to make similar concessions in Macedonia does not seem very prudent: the circumstances are so different, especially in regard to the number of nationalities in Macedonia.

A. P.

Aug[ust] 24, 1912.

Still, if concessions are made in Albania we cannot expect the Macedonians to stay quiet nor would it be just to exclude them from benefits simply because they have kept comparatively quiet.

H. N.

Tewfik Pasha told me yesterday that the Turkish Cabinet were considering Macedonian reforms.

M. de Fleuriat whom I informed of this telegram said that he did not suppose that the French Ambassador had yet made any representations to the Porte (see my sep[arate] minute of

(¹) [This telegram was repeated to Sofia (as No. 40); to Constantinople (as No. 475); to St. Petersburg (as No. 717); to Vienna (as No. 119). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

his communication to me of to-day's date respecting C[oun]t Berchtold's communication).⁽²⁾ I think it will be more logical to wait a little before saying anything to Tewfik—if nothing more comes from Vienna, I might ask C[oun]t Trautmansdorf one day, whether C[oun]t Berchtold means to say anything more

L. M.
Aug[ust] 24, 1912.
E. G.

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. Sir L. Mallet's minute reported that the French Chargé d'Affaires had told him that M. Poincaré had replied to Count Berchtold that he would be happy to exchange views on the Balkan question, but that if anything more concrete were proposed he would have to consult the Cabinets of London and of St. Petersburg before replying. (F.O. 36328/34661/12/44.)]

No. 650.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 35840/32869/12/44.

(No. 381.)

Sir,

Berlin, D. August 23, 1912.

R. August 26, 1912.

As I had the honour to report in my telegram No. 92⁽¹⁾ of yesterday Lord Granville called on the Secretary of State of the Foreign Office yesterday, to inform His Excellency that you had instructed His Majesty's Minister at Cetinje to urge the Montenegrin Government to bring about an immediate cessation of hostilities and His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople to give counsels of moderation to the Turkish Government, and he expressed to His Excellency your hope that he would send similar instructions to the two German Representatives. Herr von Kiderlen replied that the Turkish Ambassador had complained to him on the 20th instant of the behaviour of the Montenegrins and he had consequently telegraphed at once to authorize the German Representative at Cetinje to make representations to the Montenegrin Government if most (not necessarily all) of his colleagues received similar instructions. His Excellency said that that authorization would be sufficient to cause the German representative to act in concert with his British colleague if, as was probable, one or two other Ministers had received the necessary authorization. Herr von Kiderlen had also urged on the Turkish Ambassador here the necessity for moderation on the part of Turkey: he had not sent any instructions to Constantinople as he was satisfied with the news he had received to the effect that the Turkish Representative at Cetinje was using all his influence with the Turkish frontier authorities in favour of all possible moderation.

The Cologne Gazette of the 21st instant published a semi-official telegram from Berlin pointing out that from all reports Montenegro seemed to be the aggressor on this occasion: that all the Powers, including Russia, were strongly urging Montenegro to keep the peace: that not one single Great Power had any interest in allowing the Eastern question to be raised at present, and that they all had on the contrary every interest in preventing that event: and that it was impossible for them to permit quite a secondary State like Montenegro to attempt to play the part of Providence, so that, if necessary, energetic steps would have to be taken to keep Montenegro quiet. The telegram was not very happily drafted, as, besides repeating itself once or twice, it expressed two quite contradictory views: at the beginning it said that there could be no possible doubt that Turkey had absolutely no interest in entering into conflicts with Montenegro and that this was the best proof that the present

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced, as the information it contained is given more fully in this despatch. (F.O. 35531/32869/12/44.)]

troubles were initiated by the Montenegrins; later on it said, as a warning to the Montenegrins, that Turkey could not be expected to continue to bear these perpetual provocations with the praiseworthy patience she had displayed up to the present, more especially as a war with Montenegro, far from adding to Turkey's internal difficulties, would almost certainly be a godsend to her by giving the turbulent Albanians something thoroughly congenial to do.

Lord Granville asked Herr von Kiderlen if he would give him his views on Count Berchtold's proposals. His Excellency, who seemed much more whole-hearted in their favour than Lord Granville had gathered Herr Zimmermann to be a week earlier, and who in speaking of them had almost the manner of explaining something for which he was jointly responsible, though he was presumably merely playing the part of a "good second," declared that the idea which some of the papers seemed to have that the proposals aimed at autonomy either for Albania or Macedonia was entirely false: what Count Berchtold wished was that the Powers should say to the Balkan States:—"The present Turkish Government is moving in the right direction, it is preparing to give back to the Albanians the old rights and privileges, the old system of decentralization, which they used to enjoy: no doubt when it has finished with Albania it will apply the same principles to Macedonia: in the meanwhile your best policy from every point of view is to keep quiet, to avoid adding to the difficulties of the Turkish Government and to watch with patience the development of events which will almost certainly be satisfactory to you," to the Turkish Government he would propose merely to say that the Powers are glad to see the principle on which it seems to be acting and that they trust it will continue in the same course. Herr von Kiderlen thought that there could be nothing objectionable in this from any point of view. Lord Granville asked whether he had heard any expressions of views on the part of other Governments or Ambassadors and Herr von Kiderlen merely replied that he believed they had now all accepted the proposal to exchange views on the subject.

This morning's "Lokal-Anzeiger" published a leading article, which had every appearance of being inspired by the Foreign Office, stating that the conversations brought about by Count Berchtold's action were now in full swing and it was to be hoped that they would lead to good results. Nobody outside the higher positions in the various Foreign Offices probably realized the difficulties and delays which interfered with every attempt to obtain united European action owing to the division into two camps of the European concert. Even when the interests and object in view were identic those two camps advanced separately, and it was especially in one camp that this principle of separate action was clung to with extraordinary obstinacy. The results were deplorable as had lately been shown in the attempts at mediation between Italy and Turkey, and it was to be feared they might again appear in the present negotiations. It was not as if there were any real difference of opinion but the determination to act separately caused most unnecessary delays. "Perhaps this time France, satisfied with the successes which, according to the Paris Press, have lately been won on the Neva, will consent to use her influence in common with the other Powers without striving for separate laurels of her own."

I have, &c.

(For the Ambassador),

GRANVILLE.

Count de Sals to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35805/32869/12/44.

Cettinje, D. August 24, 1912, 7 P M.

Tel. (No. 17.)

R. August 25, 1912, 8 A M.

After consultation with Russian Minister and other (? representatives), who are taking similar action, I spoke to the King this morning respecting grave responsibility he would incur by maintaining an aggressive attitude and danger of finding himself face to face with Turkey without the least support from anyone. His reply is to the following effect:—

Stories of the taking of Berana by the Montenegrins and their presence on Turkish territory are absolutely untrue. It is difficult for him to calm agitation in his country unless the Powers will give favourable consideration to his appeal for settlement of frontier question. Nothing is further from his intentions than to provoke Turkey or to trouble peace of Europe. He has given strict orders to avoid conflict with Turkish troops. He trusts that Powers will recommend Porte to take precautions against conflicts, which are difficult to avoid as long as there are Turkish posts and entrenchments on Montenegrin territory.

In company with Austrian Minister, I have joined in similar representations to Prime Minister, who, after earnestly recommending frontier question, urged intervention of Powers at Constantinople to induce the Turks to cease attacks on Christians at Berana. The latter were fighting to defend their houses from destruction, but would submit if their property were assured. If desired, General Vukotitch would co-operate with Turkish commander in settling the conflict by peaceful methods.

MINUTES.

Please see my minutes on 34435⁽²⁾ and 34555,⁽³⁾ as to the appeal of King of Montenegro to Berlin Treaty Powers.

A. P.

Aug[ust] 26, 1912.

Wait till we have a reply to the telegram sent as 35691.⁽⁴⁾

L. M.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Constantinople (as No. 492), to Vienna (as No. 129); to Berlin (as No. 129); to St. Petersburg (as No. 733). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 600-1, No. 604.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 602-3, No. 606.]

⁽⁴⁾ [Not reproduced. *cp. supra*, p. 603, No. 606, note ⁽⁶⁾.]

No. 652.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Paris, August 24, 1912.

F.O. 35811/34661/12/44.

D. 7.5 P.M.

Tel. (No. 105.) Confidential.

R. 7 P.M.

Your despatch No. 408 of 21st August⁽²⁾ received last night.

Minister for Foreign Affairs told me yesterday that Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs considers Austrian proposal as a political move towards autonomy for Albania, and apprehends that it will encourage aspirations for autonomy amongst the other Balkan nationalities.

MINUTE

Even if the proposal has not the motive attributed to it, it is certain to produce the result anticipated

H. N.

L. M.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Constantinople (as No. 497), to St. Petersburg (as No. 738), to Vienna (as No. 133), to Berlin (as No. 132), to Sofia (as No. 31). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v supra*, pp. 632-3, No. 645.]

No. 653.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 36202/32869/12/44.

Constantinople, D. August 26, 1912, 9 P.M.

Tel. (No. 386.)

R. August 27, 1912, 11 A.M.

Your telegram No. 484 of Aug[ust] 24⁽²⁾ and Cettinje telegrams Nos. 15 and 16 of Aug[ust] 23⁽²⁾: Berana.

I told M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] this morning that information in the possession of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] showed fairly conclusively that Montenegrin troops had not crossed frontier, that great excesses had been committed by Turkish troops, and that several villages had been destroyed. His Excellency's reply was shuffling and evasive, while he abandoned his previous assertion that Montenegrin troops had entered Turkish territory he adhered to statement that Montenegrin officers had assisted Christians. As to the destruction of villages he pretended that it had been done by the rebel leaders in order to force inhabitants to join them. I told his Excellency that he must not expect me to believe it.

He denied all knowledge of any women or children being detained at Berana and asked where they could be sent to if their villages were destroyed? I said that the prisoners would settle that for themselves and that great thing was that they should be allowed to go as their detention kept up the resentment and excitement in Montenegro. But I could extract no promise from His Excellency that orders would be sent.

His Excellency said that a strict enquiry was being made into the origin of the incident and observed that if it was shown that the responsibility lay with the Turkish

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to St. Petersburg (as No. 759); to Vienna (as No. 140); to Paris (as No. 356); to Berlin (as No. 136). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. These telegrams urged that steps should be taken at Constantinople to stop the Berana outrages. (F.O. 35652/32869/12/44. F.O. 35702/32869/12/44)]

troops there would at all events be this advantage that the Porte could punish guilty. From this and from his other language I am convinced that Turkish Government are well aware that their troops have committed grave excesses but they believe and hope to be able to establish that they were provoked by the Montenegrins against whom they are much incensed. I urged very strongly on M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] necessity for terminating incident.

Sent to Cettinje.

MINUTE.

I think he should be approved as he has carried out his instructions well.

L. M.
E. G.

No. 654.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35607/34661/12/44.

(No. 417.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 26, 1912.

Sir L. Mallet informed the ^{French} Chargé d'Affaires on the 19th inst[ant] ^{Russian} that I sympathized with the motives of the Austro-Hungarian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] in making his recent communiqué, namely the establishment of good gov[ernmen]t and the maintenance of peace in the Balkans and that I should be ready to instruct H[is] M[ajesty's] Chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople to adopt an encouraging attitude towards the Porte in the prosecution of reforms, but that I feared that any formal representation might render the task of the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t more difficult by exciting the chauvinism of the reactionary party.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch was repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 283). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 655.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35612/34661/12/44.

(No. 284.) Very Confidential.

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 26, 1912.

The Russian chargé d'affaires called on the 19th instant⁽²⁾ to say that the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs had informed the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at St. Petersburg that he would agree to give advice at Constantinople, but not collectively.

As to the Balkan States, it did not seem necessary to give them advice, as so much had already been given.

M. de Etter was instructed to inform me very confidentially that the Russian Government had been approached by the Bulgarian and by the Greek Governments

⁽¹⁾ [The original draft of this despatch is not available; the text given here is taken from the Confidential Print.]

⁽²⁾ [cp. immediately preceding document]

in the sense that if reforms were given to the Albanians, their own nationalities could not be expected to go without similar concessions, and that they hoped that Russia would take the initiative at Constantinople.

The Russian Government think that they cannot ignore this request, and that they should perhaps try to diminish the reforms to be granted to Albania and then ask Turkey to give a similar dose to Macedonia, but that there should be no pressure. The Russians were anxious to know my views.

Sir L. Mallet said that he would ask me, but that he did not think that two European Powers could possibly ask the Porte to diminish the reforms which they were voluntarily giving to the Albanians, which he believed had already been granted.

He added that he was personally much afraid of giving so much advice to Turkey just now, and that whatever was done should be done quite unofficially and privately.

I am, &c.

E. GREY.

No. 656.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cantwright ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35613/34661/12/44.

(No. 54.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 26, 1912.

Sir L. Mallet informed the Austro-Hungarian Ch[argé] d'Aff[aires] on the 19th inst[ant] that I was in sympathy with the motives of the A[ustro]-H[ungarian] M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] in making his communiqué, namely the maintenance of peace and the establishment of good Gov[ernmen]t in the Balkans and that I should be very happy to exchange views with him on the subject.

Count Trautmansdorff expressed himself as much pleased and said he felt sure that C[oun]t Berchtold would be gratified at my friendly reception of his communication.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 657.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35606/34661/12/44.

(No. 387.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 26, 1912.

The Turkish Amb[assado]r called at this Office on the 19th ins[tant] ⁽²⁾ and informed Sir L. Mallet that he had received a telegram from the Turkish M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] stating that the Austro-Hungarian Amb[assado]r at

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [For the memorandum communicated by Tewfik Pasha on August 20, *v. supra*, pp. 629-30, No. 641.]

Constantinople had called upon him but had not said a word about the communiqué on the subject of the Balkans.

The reports respecting this communiqué were causing the Turkish G[overnmen]t great anxiety. The concessions to the Albanians were not in the direction of autonomy or of political decentralization, and the discussions with the Albanians do not in any way justify foreign intervention.

His Highness was instructed most strongly to deprecate such intervention and to express the earnest hope that I would not allow it to take shape.

Sir L. Mallet replied that he did not think for a moment that Count Berchtold contemplated any intervention and that he felt sure that none of the Powers wished to disturb the present situation adding that I should certainly be averse from taking any step which would render the task of the Porte more difficult at a moment when they were in the act of granting reforms to the Albanians.

He also said that I advocated the establishment of good government in the Albanian vilayets and reforms adapted to the different Provinces—but that there was no necessity to talk of political autonomy; as it had been mentioned neither by the Albanians nor by anyone else.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

No. 658.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.(¹)

F.O. 36789/34661/12/44.

(No. 82.)

Sir,

Sofia, D. August 26, 1912.

R. September 2, 1912.

At his weekly reception on the 19th instant, I asked M. Guéchoff what he thought of the Austrian proposal of "conversations" amongst the Powers respecting the Macedonian situation.

His Excellency said that Count Berchtold's "proposals," in the form which he had seen them in the Press, were too "nebulous" for him to express an opinion on their merits but that it would be most interesting to know what precisely was meant by the word "decentralization" and that if it connoted fulfilment of the provisions of Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin, the Macedonians would have every reason to congratulate themselves and Bulgaria to be satisfied. He went on to allude to the "Projet de Loi" for the Vilayets, which was elaborated by a special European Commission in August 1880, as a possible basis for the Powers to work upon.

M. Guéchoff again showed considerable anxiety at the threatening attitude of the Albanians, whose presence in districts purely Macedonian, i.e., non-Albanian, suggested that they were endeavouring to acquire an entirely new sphere of influence. Such a development, he said, could hardly fail to produce the gravest consequences, for the Macedonian peoples would never allow their national claims to be overridden by the Albanians in this way. His Excellency added, however, that the ethnographical limits of Albania and Macedonia were so vague that their definition would present the greatest difficulties—when and if—"decentralization" came to be applied.

Speculating upon the grounds which might conceivably have prompted Count Berchtold to put forward his "proposals" at the present moment, M. Guéchoff hinted to me that just a week before, on the 12th August, he had observed to the Austrian Minister here that, were any political concessions tending towards autonomy accorded to the Albanians, the Bulgarian Government might find themselves compelled

(¹) [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

by the pressure of public feeling to abandon the pacific policy which they had hitherto pursued.⁽²⁾ It is at least an interesting coincidence that Count Berchtold's proposals became known two days later at Berlin.

I should add, though M. Guéchoff made no allusion to the subject, that the recent forward movement of the Albanians, which has occasioned so much anxiety, is believed in certain quarters to have been directly instigated by Austria with the object of driving a wedge between "Old Serbia" and Serbia proper; and that the Albanians, while apparently pegging out claims for themselves, are but the cat's-paw in Austria's schemes of aggrandizement in Macedonia. The two principal leaders of the Internal Organization are said to have declared their distrust of Count Berchtold's proposals, and to have stated that their present policy of outrages will be continued so long as Europe declines to apply serious methods to the situation.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

MINUTE.

There is much sense in M. Gueshoff's remarks, for who can say where "Albania" ends and "Macedonia" begins? And in Macedonia itself, what are the boundaries between Serbs, Bulgars and Kutso-Vlachs?

H. N.

Sept[ember] 8, 1912.

L. M.

E. G.

(²) [*cp. O-U.A., IV, pp. 340-1, No 3688, and note*]

No. 659.

Sir R. Paget to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 36848/34661/12/44.

(No. 51.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. August 26, 1912.

R. September 2, 1912.

Comments in Belgrade upon Count Berchtold's proposal to aid Turkey in a policy of "decentralization" have been many and various, but as the proposal itself seems as yet vague and indefinite they are of course more or less based upon surmise. Some of the views expressed may nevertheless appear worth notice.

The aspects of the proposal which at once strike a Servian are in the first place that it emanates from Austria and is for that reason alone an object of suspicion and secondly that it may jeopardize Servian aspirations in old Serbia—which lies within the Vilayet of Kossovo and the Sandjak of Novibazar. To the Servian view the proposition presents itself as follows: If "Decentralization" means the granting of autonomy to an Albania which will include the Vilayet of Kossovo, probably also the Sandjak of Novibazar, Servia's worst fears will be realized, whilst if "Decentralization" means less than autonomy it will mean practically nothing and merely result in a continuance of the present state of affairs. It is an impossibility, Servians contend, to satisfy the various nationalities in Albania and Macedonia and yet maintain the integrity of Turkey and as Austria disclaims all intention of weakening Turkey, it is not apparent how Serb interests there are going to be

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]
[5092]

benefited. On the whole therefore public opinion in Serbia views the proposal with uneasiness and disfavour.

Monsieur Yovanovitch, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, told me that the only scheme of "decentralization" in Albania which Serbia could endorse would be one whereby autonomy or at any rate a considerable measure of autonomy would be accorded to each separate nationality. This he did not think was an idea which at all entered into Austria's programme; it was more likely Count Berchtold contemplated an autonomous Albania as understood by the Albanians, quite regardless of the claims of the other nationalities. He said he had at first felt much worried but was beginning to think now that the proposal would come to nothing. The Austrian Press was already saying that the meaning of "decentralization" had been misunderstood and that the only intention was to assist the Porte in successfully carrying into effect those concessions to the Albanians which are already in contemplation.

Incidentally I may perhaps mention that when Monsieur Yovanovitch discussed the question of giving autonomy to each separate nationality I pointed out that this might lead to rival claims, dissension and fighting as had been the case before. He replied that this would not be so now but when I enquired whether this meant that Serbia and Bulgaria had an agreement and had settled their differences in Macedonia he denied the existence of any actual agreement and only admitted that the subject had been very thoroughly discussed between the two Governments.

The Servian Press which at first seemed puzzled and uncertain as to the bearing of the Austrian proposal has now with the exception of the Government organ the "Samouprava," which is very reserved, adopted a tone of hostility towards it.

Count Berchtold is accused of Jesuitism and hiding his real motives behind apparent benevolence towards Turkey. He has not had the courage to pronounce the word "Autonomy" but that is in effect his idea. *An autonomous Albania*,⁽²⁾ as understood by the Albanians, embracing the Vilayets of Kossovo and Monastir, would of course absolutely conflict with Serb and Bulgarian interests, and an autonomous Macedonia as understood by Bulgaria would necessarily make bad blood between Serbia and Bulgaria. As a result there would be constant friction between Serbia and Turkey, Serbia and Bulgaria and Bulgaria and Turkey, and Austria would fish in troubled waters all the while preparing her own advance to Salonica. This is Austria's countermove to the rumoured *Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty of alliance* ⁽²⁾

The Press also sees in Count Berchtold's action a reply to the recent meeting of the German Emperor and the Czar at Baltischport and Monsieur Poincaré's visit to St. Petersburg, on both of which occasions Balkan affairs were discussed. Austria it is said has hereby reminded Germany as well as the Triple Entente that in such discussions she cannot be left out in the cold and has to be reckoned with. But it is hoped that the Triple Entente will see through the game and satisfaction is expressed that Great Britain, France and Russia are showing some reserve, as, Count Berchtold's proposal merely has the furtherance of Austrian designs in view.

It is perhaps noticeable that although Count Berchtold's move is said to be a check to the Serbo-Bulgarian alliance and also to be directed against the Triple Entente one or two relatively not unimportant newspapers show distrust of both Bulgaria and Russia. King Ferdinand is supposed to have been informed of Count Berchtold's proposal some time ago and for reasons best known to himself to be supporting it in defiance of Bulgarian public opinion, whilst Russia it is maintained has secret arrangements with Austria, and these two Powers have long ago parcelled out the Balkan States between them. Austria is to take Serbia, Montenegro and Albania whilst Russia takes Bulgaria.

The interest which Count Berchtold's project at first excited in the Press is gradually subsiding and the opinion, expressed to me by Monsieur Yovanovitch, is gaining ground that it will result in nothing.

I have, &c.

RALPH PAGET

(2) [Italics not in original. v. p. 645, note (3).]

MINUTES.

One could not expect a better reception at Belgrade for any proposals coming from Austria. Personally I doubt whether Count Berchtold is such a Machiavelli as the Servians believe

H N.

Sept[ember] 3, 1912.

This is an interesting despatch and worth reading

The Servian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] thinks (and evidently hopes) that C[oun]t Berchtold's proposals will come to nothing.

The passage I have marked on the penultimate page⁽³⁾ shows how complicated is the question of autonomy and makes one realize how very gradually and cautiously the question of reform must be approached.

Any drastic attempt to solve the problem is bound to make the situation worse

This despatch shows, moreover, that Count Berchtold has not got any kudos with Servia for proposing decentralization. Mr. Barclay reports in the same sense from Sofia and this ought to make it unnecessary for M. Sazonow to try and go one better

L M.

E G.

(³) ["An autonomous Albania . . . Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty of Alliance."]

No. 660.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 36086/19/12/44.

Tel. (No. 758.)

Foreign Office, August 27, 1912, 3.20 P.M.

I was proposing to await a more definite proposal from C[oun]t Berchtold before saying anything to the Turkish G[overnmen]t.

I would rather deprecate representations from each of the Powers at Constantinople⁽²⁾ but should be prepared to speak to the Turkish Amb[assado]r here expressing approval of reforms granted to the Albanians and the hope that policy of reform in Macedonia would also be adopted.

(¹) [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 355); to Constantinople (No. 513); to Berlin (No. 135); to Vienna (No. 139); to Sofia (No. 45). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

(²) [In his telegram No. 308 of August 26, Sir G. Buchanan had reported an enquiry from M. Sazonov as to whether Sir Edward Grey proposed to instruct Mr. Marling to make representations at Constantinople in the same sense as those being made by the French. *cp. supra*, p. 635, No. 649. (F.O. 36086/19/12/44)]

No. 661.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Berlin, August 27, 1912.

F.O. 36223/32869/12/44.

D. 8.20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 96.)

R. 10.25 P.M.

Montenegro.

Lord Granville saw Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs this evening, and found his Excellency on the whole very optimistic. He has given counsels of moderation to both Cetinje and Constantinople, which have been well received. His Excellency said that the Turks were willing to settle the frontier question, but argued that the present moment of excitement was unfavourable, as the population of the districts to be ceded were unwilling to acquiesce. On the other hand, Montenegrins might reply that that was a perpetual excuse.

(Very Confidential.)

His Excellency said that he had gathered unofficially that present Turkish Government were inclined to recommence paying King Nicolas a subvention, which would have an excellent effect. He begged Lord Granville not to mention this to his colleagues here for fear of its reaching the ears of small States.

MINUTES.

I was under the impression the subvention was actually being paid.

A. P.

Aug[ust] 28, 1912.

Tewfik Pasha said so only the other day. I cannot see much ground for Herr von Kiderlen's optimism.

H. N.

L. M.

E. G.

No. 662.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

Sofia, August 27, 1912.

F.O. 36228/33672/12/44.

D. 9.20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 28.)

R. 11 P.M.

Although there are no striking new facts and relative calm still prevails owing to public's hope that the Government will obtain satisfaction from the Porte, situation here is becoming gradually more strained and uneasy. Minister for Foreign Affairs says that it is "difficilement tenable."

I hear on good authority that, should the Turks make any concentration of troops on the frontier, the Bulgarian Government would give immediate instructions for a general mobilisation. Russian Minister is of opinion that Russia should pose as the champion of all Orthodox Christians in the peninsula with a view to gaining time. He has suggested this to his Government.

French Minister considers that the only practical solution of the situation would be for a Turkish Government to give a complete and prompt satisfaction with regard to Kochana incident.⁽²⁾ I share his view.

The general opinion here is that the most critical stage will be the moment when peace is proclaimed between Turkey and Italy.

King of the Bulgarians and Minister for Foreign Affairs have both for the present abandoned their journeys abroad.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Constantinople (as No. 523); to St. Petersburg (as No. 769); to Paris (as No. 362); to Vienna (as No. 143); to Berlin (as No. 140). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v infra*, p. 621, No. 626, and *note* ⁽³⁾.]

No. 663.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Vienna, August 27, 1912.

Many things have occurred during the last few weeks which I have been spending in Marienbad that deserve close attention, and especially among them is the initiative

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. VI of 1912]

taken by Count Berchtold in inviting the Powers to concert together with a view to giving Turkey advice how she should act in the present difficult crisis through which she is passing. Count Berchtold, I think, has taken this unexpected step inspired by two motives: the first is the conviction on his part that the crisis in Turkey is exceedingly serious, and his sincere desire to try to do something to avert a catastrophe which may involve with it the gravest consequences for the peace of Europe. In his opinion it is better to try and do something rather than to cross one's arms and await the end without making some effort to control events. What Count Berchtold's proposal means is not as yet very clear, but from private information which has reached me it seems to amount to this:—that the Porte should follow the example of Austria and not that of Hungary in dealing with racial problems. Hungary acts on the lines of the Young Turk Committee, that is to say crushes Croats, Roumanians and Slavs and tries to magyarize them, just as that Committee has attempted to ottomanize Bulgarians, Greeks, Albanians etc. Austria acts in a diametrically opposite way, for Poles, Czechs, Slavs, Germans etc. each enjoy practical independence; they can use their own language in Law Courts, in the Diets, as well as in the Austrian Parliament; they have their own schools in districts where they are sufficiently numerous, and in those districts the officials are largely drawn from the predominating nationalities. In Count Berchtold's mind, I am told, exists the belief that a great step forward in the direction of pacification would be found if the Austrian system were applied by the Porte to European Turkey without introducing the necessity of raising the question of autonomy, or of delimiting ethnographical districts. No idea exists in the Austrian proposal of raising the thorny question of autonomy in the European provinces of Turkey, but it is thought here that if something on the lines of Count Berchtold's proposal is not done soon, the question of autonomy will before long be raised in an acute form, and then we shall have trouble between the European Powers over this matter, and there will be an end of Europe acting in common in the Near East.

The second cause which has inspired Count Berchtold to put forward his proposal is—as I have been confidentially informed—annoyance with Germany on account of what passed at Baltic Port. At the "Ballplatz" the meeting at that place is looked upon as an attempt on the part of Germany to continue the policy of the Potsdam interview⁽²⁾ two years ago. I am told that the Austrian Government have learnt that Bethmann Hollweg has returned from Russia greatly impressed with the reserve-power of that country, and they have also learnt that at Baltic Port Germany tried to convince Russia of the advantage it would be to her to pursue a friendly policy towards the former, for Germany alone was able and willing to restrain Austria from pursuing a forward policy in the Balkans. My informant tells me that much irritation was felt here at Germany's action towards her ally, and the answer has been that Count Berchtold—to show his independence—has made a proposal with regard to the Near East without previously consulting Germany. I am also told that there is information in the possession of the "Ballplatz" to the effect that a few days before the outbreak of war between Italy and Turkey Baron von Marschall assured the Grand Vizier Hakki-Pasha that Germany would restrain Italy from proceeding to extremities. The knowledge of this by Italy may perhaps explain her precipitate action in declaring war. Anyhow the rôle played by Germany in pretending to be able to control the actions of her allies is not appreciated here. . . .⁽³⁾

Yours truly,

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

⁽²⁾ [The policy of the Potsdam interview will be described in a later volume.]

⁽³⁾ [The rest of the letter deals with Austro-Hungarian policy in the Balkans.]

No. 664.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 36363/36363/12/44.

Tel. (No. 68.) Confidential.

Vienna, August 28, 1912, 12.55 P.M.

Roumania.

Minister for Foreign Affairs returned last night from Roumania, and I am to see him to-morrow. I learn from a very confidential source that visit of Minister for Foreign Affairs to Roumania was mainly an act of courtesy, but that it served also to confirm an understanding with her. That in the event of a war breaking out between Austria and Russia over Balkan matters Roumania is to stand firm with Austria, and that in the event of complications arising in Balkans which do not lead to outbreak of war between Russia and Austria Roumania will let her actions be guided from Vienna.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Bucharest (as No. 5); to St. Petersburg (as No. 776); to Constantinople (as No. 535). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 665.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 36424/19/12/44.

St. Petersburg, D. August 28, 1912, 11.55 P.M.

Tel. (No. 315.)

*R. August 29, 1912, 10.25 A.M.*Your telegram No. 758 of August 27.⁽²⁾

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] while expressing approval of your suggestion said that he had already in conversation with the Turkish Ambassador urged necessity for making some show of concessions to Macedonia but feared that he had produced no effect.

His Excellency then proceeded to say that news which he had received to-day both through Russian Minister at Sofia and through the Bulgarian Representative here caused him grave anxiety. Public feeling in Bulgaria appeared to be incensed with inaction of Government and resented fact that while Mohammedan Albanians were obtaining the concessions they asked for the Powers were doing nothing on behalf of Christian races in Macedonia. He feared that present pacific Ministry would be swept away and though not by nature a pessimist he was seriously alarmed. Bulgarian Representative here had also heard from Monastir that recourse was to be had to terrorist methods for purpose of provoking reprisals that would force Bulgarian Government into war.

We could not he knew intervene as in days of the late Sultan nor could we ask the Porte to grant what the Bulgarians really wanted namely organic statute. But we must do something to show that we had not forgotten Macedonians even if there was but little prospect of obtaining any substantial concessions from Turkey. The great thing was to keep Balkan States quiet until the winter when it would be too late for them to move and we might accomplish this by inspiring in them the belief that we were interesting ourselves actively on their behalf. He would instruct Russian Representatives in London and Paris to discuss question with you and French Government.

I asked whether he proposed to exchange views also with other Governments in accordance with terms of Austrian proposal. His Excellency replied that the proposal

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Constantinople (as No. 541); to Sofia (as No. 50). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 645, No. 660.]

was purely academic in character and hinted that it was not necessary that Austria should take whole matter into her own hands. England France and Russia should consult together before approaching other Powers and he thought that time had come when they should also consider what was to be done should war break out in Balkans. News which he had received from Belgrade similar to that reported in His Majesty's Minister's telegram No. 3⁽³⁾ was disquieting though he had no confirmation of alleged massacre beyond that of the murder of Kaimakam.

Then according to what Austrian Ambassador had told him yesterday Turkey was insisting on Montenegro demobilising as a preliminary condition to meeting of the two generals. In reply to question from Ambassador he had expressed opinion that this demand was unreasonable unless Turkey also demobilised and that Powers might invite both Governments to withdraw their troops from frontier and might urge Turkey to effect settlement of frontier question.

MINUTES.

The information we have received from Belgrade is that the first reports were exaggerated; and on the whole the Bulgarians seem rather quieter—but all this may change very rapidly for the worse if there are further incidents.

Q[uer]y. Simply repeat to Paris and await comm[unicatio]n from Russian Embassy.⁽⁴⁾

A. P.

Aug[ust] 29, 1912.

(I think we might send this by bag to Paris to-night. Not much time will be lost and the Embassy saved the labour of decyphering.)

I fear that it will be difficult to bamboozle the Balkan States in the manner suggested by the Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs].

According to our news from Belgrade, the reported massacre has caused only moderate excitement there, so that the danger point is more at Sofia.

The suggestion in the last paragraph seems good.

We had better await the Russian communication which will presumably contain some concrete proposal for dealing with the situation.

H. N.

This telegram takes a most alarmist view which does not seem to be justified by the facts before us.

The situation is somewhat confusing. M. Etter made a communication yesterday⁽⁴⁾ which I suppose was meant to embody the last paragraph of this telegram. But he distinctly told me that Montenegro had proposed herself to demobilize. He said nothing about keeping Austria in the dark. Perhaps we shall hear further.

The situation is not improved by the jealousy and rivalry between M. Sazonow and Count Berchtold.

I have repeated this telegram to Mr Marling in order to avoid misunderstanding.

Repeat C[onstantino]ple 541 and repeat first two paragraphs to Sofia for observations.

L. M.

If the present Turkish Gov[ernmen]t can prevent further provocation I do not believe that there will be further trouble before the winter.

E. G.

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced. Telegram (No. 3) from Sir R. Paget, of August 26, D. 12.40 P.M., R. 5 P.M. (F.O. 36085/36085/12/44.) It informed Sir Edward Grey of the outrages at Berana.]

⁽⁴⁾ [cp. *infra*, pp. 685-6, No. 689.]

No. 666.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr Marling.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 36228/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 529.)

*Foreign Office, August 28, 1912.*Mr. Barclay's tel[egram] No. 28.⁽²⁾

You should impress upon M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] the extreme importance of acting promptly and decisively in punishing severely all officials found guilty in Kochana incident.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Sofia (No. 48); to St Petersburg (No. 771); to Paris (No. 363); to Vienna (No. 144); to Berlin (No. 141)]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 646, No. 662]

No. 667.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 36424/19/12/44.

Tel. (No. 533.)

Foreign Office, August 28, 1912, 10.38 P.M.

The Russian Ch[argé] d'Affaires asked on instructions from M. Sazonow⁽²⁾ that you should be instructed to advise the Porte to accept an offer made by Montenegro to demobilize and themselves to withdraw Turkish Troops from the frontier and make no further concentration in that neighbourhood. They should also be urged to ratify the Protocol of 1908.

You may act as desired if your Colleagues have similar instructions but there should be no collective representation.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 775); to Paris (No. 366), to Vienna (No. 146); to Cetinje (No. 49). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. infra*, p. 676, No. 700.]

No. 668.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 36792/33672/12/44.

(No. 85.) Confidential.

Sofia, D. August 28, 1912.

Sir,

R. September 2, 1912.

In my despatch No. 79 of the 14th instant,⁽²⁾ I mentioned that though public feeling was running high, M. Guéchoff had every hope of keeping it within bounds. Although no very striking new facts have occurred and relative calm apparently prevails owing to the public hope that satisfaction will be obtained by the Government from the Porte, in connection with the Kotchana massacres, signs are not wanting that a change is coming over the situation. On the one hand, the personal attacks against King Ferdinand, which do not for the moment display so much anti-dynastic feeling, as impatience at the lack of action to which the country is condemned: the sudden affection displayed by the King for all that is military; the

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 609-10, No. 614]

striking place accorded to the army at Tirnovo; His Majesty's reception of new cadets, a thing hitherto unprecedented in his reign; his loan of the Samara flag on Saturday last on the occasion of the Shipka anniversary; the adjournment, indefinite for the present, of His Majesty's departure abroad; on the other hand, the warlike tone that has pervaded the numerous meetings held all over the country, and that has reached a pitch never before attained in Bulgaria; and again the complete change of front in the Government organs—all these facts tend to show a new and disquieting situation.

No Bulgarian Government could have been more Turcophil, or at least more inclined to live in terms of "*bon voisinage*" with Turkey than that of M. Guéchoff. But in spite of His Excellency's efforts the relations between the two countries have not proved satisfactory. No questions of any importance have been settled between them, frontier affrays have been more frequent than ever, the fate of Bulgars in Macedonia has not changed; there have been serious massacres at Ishtib and at Kotchana and there has been no redress. The most pacifically inclined of men—as M. Guéchoff—or the best intentioned—as M. Daneff—have grounds for discouragement. It may be said that they have tried their best, but all in vain. And now, with the mass of the people against them, with a warlike propaganda spreading in the smallest villages, the moment is fast coming when they may have to choose between resignation and war. If they decide on the former course the whole Government and the parties they represent will become the object of public odium and be doomed for good and all in the eyes of their countrymen; if they decide on the latter course they will feel that they have done their duty and only bowed to the supreme will of the people. Moreover King Ferdinand is not popular. The army is believed to be loyal, but there is a very warlike feeling prevailing amongst its ranks and His Majesty may well find himself in the unpleasant predicament of having to choose between leading his army to the Turkish frontier or of turning his back upon Bulgaria for ever.

M. Guéchoff himself describes the present position as "*difficilement tenable*."

It appears that much concern is felt in Government circles at Count Berchtold's visit to the Roumanian Court just at this moment.

I hear on very reliable authority that it has been decided by the Government that should the Turks make any concentration of troops on the frontier, orders will at once be issued for immediate mobilization of the Bulgarian army.

I have also heard that the Bulgarian Government some six weeks ago gave an order for some one hundred thousand coats for the army, and they are now awaiting large provisions of medical stores.

The Bulgarian Minister of Finance is in a few days proceeding to Paris to terminate the negotiations for the hundred and eighty million francs Loan promised to the Government for this autumn.

It is only in the last few days that the serious instability of the situation has been realized, due doubtless in part to the unsatisfactory report of the Kotchana Commission of enquiry as well as to the universally growing state of unrest in the Balkans. The Macedonian Organisation has decided to persist in their lawless policy and there is hardly any doubt that for the coming few weeks peace is at the mercy of a serious frontier affray or another massacre.

The Russian and the French Ministers are both of opinion that something should be done to satisfy Bulgarian public feeling. The Russian Minister has suggested to his Government that Russia should pose as champion of all Orthodox Christians in the Peninsula. I think he is vaguely indicating a "*beau geste*" with no possible practical outcome except that of gaining time and doubtless of treading on Count Berchtold's corns. The French Minister considers that the only practical solution to ease the present tension would be for the Turkish Government to give complete and *prompt* satisfaction with regard to the Kotchana incident. Although I share his views in this respect I doubt whether this would be more than a palliative. The Bulgarians seem this time to be "out" for the Autonomy of Macedonia.

The general opinion here is that the most critical stage will be reached when peace will be declared between Turkey and Italy, for then the public outcry will be unanimous in denouncing the Government and particularly King Ferdinand for having wasted yet another opportunity.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

No. 669.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Paris, August 29, 1912.

F.O. 36468/32869/12/44.

D. 1.35.

Tel. (No. 110.)

R. 3.45.

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] sent for me this morning to give me the information which I report in this and my two subsequent telegrams of to-day.⁽²⁾

Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] is anxious in regard to relations between Montenegro and Turkey. Porte requires that Montenegro shall demobilise. Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] says that Montenegro cannot be said to have mobilised her troops but he is prepared to advise King of Montenegro to withdraw his troops from frontier and to recommend Porte to similarly withdraw Turkish troops.

French M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] is quite ready to give like advice on this matter at Cetinje and Constantinople but he does not concur in a further proposal by Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that representations should be made to Porte for the carrying out of the frontier delimitation protocol of 1908, for the French Ambassador has reported that Turkish Government would refuse to do so for the Albanians would resist it and if the concession to the Albanians were to be made conditional on their accepting the frontier delimitation as suggested by Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs], whole of Albanian question would be raised anew.

I communicated to M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] your telegram to Constantinople No. 533 yesterday.⁽³⁾

MINUTES.

We are learning about the Russian proposals gradually but not from the Russians themselves.

There seems no objection to the proposed representations at Constantinople and Cetinje about demobilisation—indeed we have probably made them at the former place already.

As for the frontier question one would like to know whether Mr. Marling agrees with M. Bompard but it might be better to defer asking him his views on this point till we have received and examined the Russian proposals as a whole.

It is odd that they have not reached us. (It is, I suppose, impossible that M. Etter's communication of yesterday⁽⁴⁾ was what we are expecting?)

H. N.

Aug[ust] 29, 1912.

M. Etter's proposals must be the expected communication although it seems to differ from it considerably—The advice which M. Sazonow wishes given to Turkey respecting Montenegro is harmless and has often been given before. We can await developments—Mr. Marling was only instructed to act if his colleagues received similar instruction.

L. M.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to St. Petersburg (as No. 779); to Vienna (as No. 148); to Constantinople (as No. 542); to Cetinje (as No. 50). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [See immediately following documents.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 650, No. 667.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*cp. infra*, p. 676, No. 700.]

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Paris, August 29, 1912.

F.O. 36483/33672/12/44.

D. 3·8 P.M.

Tel. (No. 111.)

R. 5·5 P.M.

My telegram No. 110 of to-day.⁽²⁾

French Minister for Foreign Affairs informs me that the French and Russian Governments have received disquieting information in regard to the agitation in Bulgaria against Turkey, and they fear the effect of public opinion on the peaceful inclinations of the King and present Government of Bulgaria.

Minister for Foreign Affairs, as a means of exercising pressure in favour of peace, has intimated to the Bulgarian Government, through a channel at his command, that unless calmness be restored and maintained the French Government will refuse quotation on the Paris Bourse to the Bulgarian loan which was arranged for about three months ago at the request of the Russian Government for railway and such-like purposes.

An intimation to that effect has been made to the French banks concerned in the loan. A public announcement of the action of the French Government will, the Minister for Foreign Affairs hopes, have a calming effect in Bulgaria, but unfortunately the Bulgarian Government have, he believes, a reserve war fund of about £2,800,000.

MINUTES.

As long as there is no further serious incident in Macedonia it may be hoped that the peace party in Bulgaria will triumph.—at all events till the cold weather begins, when we should be safe till next year.

A. P.

August 30, 1912.

If public opinion becomes too strong and M. Gueschoff has to go no refusal to quote a loan in Paris is likely to restrain Bulgaria.

H. N.

L. M.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Sofia (as No. 53); to Constantinople (as No. 549), to Berlin (as No. 146); to Vienna (as No. 151); to St. Petersburg (as No. 788); to Bucharest (as No. 8); to Belgrade (as No. 6); to Rome (as No. 276). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 671.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Paris, August 29, 1912.

F.O. 36484/36484/12/44.

D. 4·45 P.M.

Tel. (No. 112.) Confidential.

R. 8 P.M.

My telegrams Nos. 110 and 111 of to-day.⁽²⁾

M. Sazonof has informed the French Minister for Foreign Affairs that the Austrian chargé d'affaires has intimated to him that he will shortly communicate to the Russian Government a programme founded on the Austrian Minister for Foreign

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to St. Petersburg (as No. 789); to Rome (as No. 277); to Vienna (as No. 158); to Constantinople (as No. 550); to Berlin (as No. 147); to Sofia (as No. 54), to Bucharest (as No. 9); to Belgrade (as No. 7). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding documents.]

Affairs' decentralisation proposal. M. Sazonof suspects that the programme may include a suggestion for a conference. M. Sazonof is of opinion, and French Minister for Foreign Affairs concurs, that if a conference seems inevitable it would be advisable that it should be proposed by Russia, France, and England with a programme drawn up by those Powers rather than by those of the Triple Alliance, so as to give the former the advantage of the choice of the place of meeting, and limit to the subjects to be discussed, and that with these objects there should be an immediate discussion between the Russian, French, and British Governments, of a programme. French Minister for Foreign Affairs says that the Russian Government, who were opposed to the idea of a conference, appeared to be now in favour of one.

I asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs whether, as the Porte would dislike a conference on the Balkan question, a proposal for one made by Russia, France, and England might not be used to their detriment at Constantinople by the Triple Alliance Powers. His Excellency seemed to think that any such disadvantage would be more than counterbalanced by the advantages to be secured by taking the initiative.

I asked what in the French Minister for Foreign Affairs' opinion would be suitable subjects for discussion in conference. He said that they should be strictly limited to the Italo-Turkish war, Aegean Islands, and Balkan provinces of Turkey. When I expressed doubt as to the Porte accepting such a conference, the Minister for Foreign Affairs said that pressure would no doubt have to be exercised at Constantinople.

Evidently Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs desires to put forward Russia as the protector of the Christians of Turkey in Europe and not Austria.

French Government are ready to join in Russia's idea on account of the Franco-Russian Alliance, and we are to be taken in tow to our detriment at Constantinople.

MINUTES.

As it is clear from Sir F Cartwright's tel[egram] No. 70⁽³⁾ that the Austrian proposals have already been despatched from Vienna, and may be expected at any moment, it will hardly be possible for the Entente Powers to anticipate an Austrian suggestion for a conference, which according to M Sazonoff forms part of C[oun]t Berchtold's programme.

But apparently Austria and Russia both have the same object, viz. improved conditions for the Christians in Turkey, and the only point at issue is who shall be the first to champion their cause. It seems ridiculous that this should be a cause of quarrel, and it seems very desirable that we should try to induce the French, and the Russians through them, not to give the Austrian proposals a cold reception.

It seems however most undesirable to encourage any idea of a conference, as it will fan all the conflicting ambitions in the Balkans, and increase agitation in Crete. Moreover, if we join in pressing Turkey to agree to a conference our negotiations regarding the Persian Gulf will be jeopardised.

A. P

August 30, 1912.

I cannot help thinking that M. Sazonoff's attitude is largely due to jealousy of Austria and to vanity.

It is clearly impossible to anticipate the Austrian proposals.

I do not like the idea of a conference but if we are to throw cold water on the Franco-Russian programme our position becomes embarrassing.

M. Sazonoff should have thought of all this sooner. Now he appears to have lost his head.

H. N.

If Russia and Austria are seriously desirous of improving the lot of the Christian subjects of Turkey, they are not going the right way about it. What they will achieve is the downfall of the present Cabinet, who have granted the reforms to the Albanians which the Committee of Union and Progress refused. A downfall of the present Cabinet would lead to the most serious disorders in Albania, where the population is in favour of the new Government and against the Committee (see 38873).⁽⁴⁾

⁽³⁾ [v. immediately succeeding document.]

⁽⁴⁾ [Not reproduced. This is a despatch from Mr. Marling, of August 7, received August 22, 1912, in which he describes the situation in Albania. (F.O 38873/19/12/44)]

It would be followed by a revival of Chauvinism and might lead to war with Bulgaria. It is indeed quite possible that the Turks may welcome this way out of the war with Italy, the Army would welcome peace with Italy, if they were promised war with Bulgaria. I do not think we should encourage either Count Beichtold or M. Sazonow. As for a conference, it is a childish proposal at present for one reason. How can Italy be represented on a Conference which is to deal with Turkey? When the war is over, a conference may become necessary although it is much to be deprecated, for it cannot fail to emphasize the points of difference between Austria and Russia and therefore between the two European groups. The best chance for peace at this critical moment is not to raise a lot of thorny questions on which neither Russia nor Austria, when it comes to the point will care to give way. A conference *may* become unavoidable when the war is over but it is premature to talk of it and if the idea gets out, it cannot fail to precipitate a crisis in Turkey.⁽⁵⁾

The best policy for the moment is on the one hand to encourage the Turkish Cabinet, in as unostentatious a manner as possible, to put their proposals into shape without delay and on the other hand to exert all our influence on the Balkan States in favour of peace.

L. M.
Aug[ust] 80.

⁽⁵⁾ [At this point Sir L. Mallet inserted the draft of a proposed telegram to Sir F. Bertie. It was not sent, owing to the fact, which Sir L. Mallet noted on the paper, that he "spoke in this sense to M. de Fleury and the report of my conversation will go to Paris to-night and be telegraphed to St. Petersburg." *cp. infra*, pp. 666-7, No. 690. Sir Edward Grey had drafted in his own hand as an addition to the telegram the following paragraph —

"The guiding principle with regard to a Conference should be that there must first be a general agreement between the Powers, especially between those most directly interested, as to the proposals to be made and the conclusions desired. Otherwise a Conference may be worse than useless for it may divide instead of uniting the Powers. E. G."]

No. 672.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

Vienna, August 29, 1912.

F.O. 36486/34661/12/44.

Tel. (No. 70.)

D. 7.25 P.M.

R. 10.30 P.M.

Austrian proposal.⁽²⁾

I have seen Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day and discussed with him his proposal with regard to European action towards Turkey. He informed me that he was sending a note to the Powers on the subject to-night by messenger. This note will explain more fully the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs' views with regard to Turkey. His Excellency assured me that he never contemplated autonomies or intervention in European Turkey. His idea is that if the European Powers can be got to work in concert with regard to the Near East, where they all desire to maintain the *status quo*, it will be easy for them to give similar general instructions to their representatives at Constantinople, so that when any crisis arises there they may seize the opportunity in their conversations with the Government of giving independent and identical advice. In this way the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs believes much good may be achieved through weight of moral pressure of Europe on the Porte. His Excellency told me that his proposal had already had some effect on the Turkish Government, who, it appears, had just informed Austrian Ambassador at Constantinople that they were disposed to extend the concessions just accorded to the Albanians also to other Christian nationalities in European Turkey.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Constantinople (as No. 547), to St. Petersburg (as No. 784); to Paris (as No. 369); to Belgrade (as No. 5); to Bucharest (as No. 7); to Sofia (as No. 51); to Berlin (as No. 142); to Rome (as No. 275). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 686-7, No. 713]

Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs expressed to me the hope that, through the influence of the Powers acting in common at Constantinople, Turkish Government might be persuaded to allow fair parliamentary representation to Christian nationalities at the coming elections.

MINUTES.

As for the last paragraph, I think it is unlikely that the Turks will allow this as it would mean the end of their political predominance in their own Empire.

H. N.

I do not think that we should have anything to do with putting pressure on Turkey with this object. C[oun]t Berchtold will end by driving Turkey into war. Neither M Sazonow nor C[oun]t Berchtold seem to realize what they are doing.

L. M.

We are taking our line in answer to Russian and French communications

E. G.

No. 673.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Therapia, August 29, 1912.

F.O. 36518/33672/12/44.

D. 11.15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 344.)

R. 10.15 A.M.

Turkey and Bulgaria.

Your telegram No. 529 of Aug[ust] 28.⁽²⁾

I spoke to Grand Vizier to day in the sense desired. He said most categorical orders had been telegraphed last night to Court Martial to hasten completion of its work, he said that similar orders sent previously had been delayed in transmission, by tel[egraph] clerks belonging to Committee of Union and Progress. Gov[ernmen]t messages to Cetti[n]jé had been similarly tampered with.

Repeated to Sofia.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to St. Petersburg (as No. 786); to Paris (as No. 371); to Vienna (as No. 149); to Berlin (as No. 144) A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 650, No. 666.]

No. 674.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey⁽¹⁾

F.O. 36499/33672/12/44.

Sofia, D. August 29, 1912.

Tel. (No. 30.)

R. August 30, 1912, 10.15.

Russian Minister called this evening to say he had to-day informed Bulgarian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] in reply to a request made by Bulgarian Representative at St. Petersburg, that Russia is of opinion that any international step in the sense of Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin is quite useless because it would be doomed in advance to certain failure.

Russian Minister said that he had also warned Bulgarian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that aggression on the part of any Balkan States would have the most fatal consequences for aggressors and that Europe would know how to extinguish any incipient conflagration. M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] suggested that Russia could not speak otherwise; but Russian Minister replied that the above declarations were absolutely categorical and final.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 373); to Berlin (as No. 148), to Vienna (as No. 153); to Rome (as No. 278); to St. Petersburg (as No. 790); to Bucharest (as No. 10). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] seems to have been much perturbed by communication and hinted at resignation.

Sent to Constantinople and Belgrade.

MINUTE.

The Russian action is satisfactory if it does not lead to the resignation of the M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs].

A. P.
Aug[ust] 30, 1912.
L. M.
E. G.

No. 675.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 36489/33672/12/44.

Sofia, D. August 29, 1912.

Tel. (No. 29.)

R. August 30, 1912, 10-10 A.M.

Bulgarian Representative is at present in Sofia and Servian Minister here has proceeded to Belgrade. In view of prevailing unrest these sudden journeys may not be unconnected with some plan of joint action on the part of the Balkan States.

Sent to Constantinople and Belgrade.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to St. Petersburg (as No. 787); to Paris (as No. 372); to Vienna (as No. 150); to Berlin (as No. 145). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 676.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Sofia, August 30, 1912.

F.O. 36600/19/12/44.

D. 4 P.M.

Tel. (No. 31.)

R. 4-45 P.M.

Your telegram No. 50 of Aug[ust] 29.⁽²⁾

Russian suggestion inspiring belief that Powers are actively interesting themselves in Balkan States seems hardly adequate to relieve present tension here. Things seem to have gone too far and Bulgaria will probably ask for something more tangible, in fact that Powers should demand grant of Organic Statute to Macedonia.

But besides danger of another massacre of Bulgarians provoked by terrorists or some serious frontier affray involving army, which would render war almost inevitable, there is question how far Balkan States are now working together.

Russia by encouraging the system of alliances between them under her aegis has been playing with fire and may now not be able to stamp it out.

Sent to Constantinople.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to St. Petersburg (as No. 791), to Paris (as No. 374); to Vienna (as No. 154); to Berlin (as No. 149). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. Sir Edward Grey referred to Sir G. Buchanan's telegram, No. 315 of August 28 (*v. supra*, pp. 648-9, No. 665) and asked for Mr. Barclay's observations on the Balkan situation. (F.O. 36424/19/12/44.)]

MINUTES.

The consideration mentioned in the first paragraph struck me on reading the original telegram.

I entirely agree with the last paragraph. It was a most dangerous policy on the part of M. Sazonoff.

It does not help us much.

H N.

L. M.

E. G.

No. 677.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Sofia, August 30, 1912.

D. 6·30 P M

R. 7·30 P.M.

F.O. 36602/32869/12/44.

Tel. (No. 32.) . Confidential.

To-day I took the liberty of communicating to Bulgarian Minister for Foreign Affairs the purport of your telegram No. 529 (Aug[ust] 28)⁽²⁾ to Constantinople and Mr. Marling's telegram No. 344 (Aug[ust] 29).⁽³⁾

His Excellency was grateful for interest shown by His Majesty's Government, but expressed considerable doubt as to the sincerity of the Porte.

Turning to internal state of things, Minister for Foreign Affairs said that Bulgaria had never before been confronted with so serious a situation. Bulgaria felt that she had all the Balkan States on her side, and, moreover, Turkey being at war with a Great Power, a unique opportunity seemed to be at hand. Besides personal attacks on the King of the Bulgarians, and unfavourable comparisons drawn between him and his predecessor had made a great impression upon His Majesty. The visit of the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs to King of Roumania at present was also a source of much annoyance.

Minister for Foreign Affairs referred to article in the "Daily News" of 20th August, headed "The impossible Turk."⁽⁴⁾ This is now being reproduced in Bulgarian press, and its disparaging comments on the Turkish troops are not conducive to peace. He said that King of the Bulgarians himself had been impressed by it. The army was quite loyal, but the warlike feeling amongst officers and men was intense.

Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that, as Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs' proposals had met with a rebuff at Constantinople, something must be done by the Great Powers. I could not extract from him the exact nature of the Bulgarian demands, but I gathered that His Excellency may make an appeal to the Powers within a few days.

Minister for Foreign Affairs added that he feared he would not be able to maintain himself in office. I replied that I felt sure that His Majesty's Government would much regret if the pressure of events proved too strong for him, as they had considerable faith in his pacific policy. I laid great stress on the fact that Great Britain does not want the peace of the Balkans disturbed.

Minister for Foreign Affairs concluded that he was in a dilemma between the will of the Powers, especially that of Russia as categorically expressed to him yesterday (see my telegram No. 30 of Aug[ust] 29),⁽⁵⁾ and weight of public pressure in the opposite direction.

(Sent to Constantinople.)

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 650, No. 666.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 656, No. 673.]

⁽⁴⁾ [Not reproduced.]

⁽⁵⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 656-7, No. 674.]

MINUTE.

The Bulgarian G[overnmen]t are naturally disposed to make the most of the present opportunity, in order to force the Powers to take some action about Macedonia.

L. M.

Aug[ust] 31.

No. 678.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

F.O. 36665/32869/12/44.

Tel. (No. 553.)

Foreign Office, August 30, 1912, 7 p.m.

The French G[overnmen]t inform me that as the result of the Russian communication referred to in my tel[egram] No. 533⁽¹⁾ they are instructing M. Bompard to recommend the withdrawal of Turkish troops from the Montenegrin frontier and that the Turkish C[ommander]-in-C[hief] should be authorised to confer with the Montenegrin Commander with a view to a settlement.

You may make a similar communication and it will be better not to mention the Protocol of 1908 unless you have already done so. H[is] M[ajesty's] Minister at Cetinje is receiving similar instructions.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 650, No. 667.]

⁽²⁾ [These instructions were sent to Count de Salis on August 30, 7 p.m., by telegram (No. 52) from Sir Edward Grey. (F.O. 36665/32869/12/44.)]

No. 679.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 37770/34661/12/44.

(No. 269.)

St. Petersburg, D. August 30, 1912.

Sir,

R. September 9, 1912.

Monsieur Sazonow returned to St. Petersburg on the 25th of this month and resumed his duties as Minister for Foreign Affairs.

In a conversation which I had with him on that day His Excellency told me that the Austrian Ambassador had said nothing further to him with regard to Count Berchtold's proposal since he had communicated it to him officially, and it did not therefore look as if Count Berchtold intended to submit his views to the Powers in a more precise or definite form. His proposal had in fact been a "coup d'épée dans l'eau." The Austrian Ambassador, however, had, in the course of their conversation, made some remarks which were of considerable interest. In speaking of the mistrust with which Austria was regarded in Russia, Count Thurn had said that, in some form or another, the question of the Sanjak was raised on every possible occasion and that his Government were tired of having it always brought up against them. It was the Sanjak here and the Sanjak there; and Austrian designs on the Sanjak were the favourite theme of the Russian Press. He could, however, tell him that, when Austria withdrew from the Sanjak, she did so with her eyes open and for strategical reasons. The military experts regarded it as a regular mousetrap and maintained that the Power that occupied it would have to occupy Serbia as well. An Austrian occupation of Serbia was, of course, out of the question, as it would provoke a European war: and Russia might therefore rest assured that all the reports of Austrian designs on the Sanjak were absolutely without foundation.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]
[5092]

Monsieur Sazonow added that he believed that what Count Thurn had told him was perfectly true and that Austria had no designs on the Sanjak.

His Excellency then said that, if you decided to send Mr. Marling instructions similar to those which the French Ambassador had already received, he would also instruct Monsieur de Giers to give friendly counsels to the Porte with regard to Macedonia. Such friendly advice could not possibly do any harm, though he rather doubted whether it would do much good. The Bulgarian Minister, His Excellency continued, had recently told Monsieur Nératow that it would be no satisfaction to Bulgaria, were the concessions about to be accorded to the Albanians to be extended to the Christian races in Macedonia. The latter were already in possession of the privileges which they conferred: and what Bulgaria really wanted was to see Macedonia endowed with the Organic Statute provided for by Article XXIII of the Treaty of Berlin.⁽²⁾

I remarked that, if what General Paprikoff had said was true, the Porte would probably reply to any representations which we might make, that the concessions now accorded to the Albanians, did but place the latter on the same footing as the Christian races in Macedonia. His Excellency agreed that this was not unlikely.

On my calling on Monsieur Sazonow two days later to inform him that you would prefer to speak to the Ottoman Ambassador in London, rather than to take any action at Constantinople itself, His Excellency told me that he had already urged Turkhan Pasha to advise his Government to make some "semblant de concessions" to the Macedonians. He did not, however, venture to hope that the Porte would follow his advice: and the news which he had that day received from Bulgaria was causing him grave anxiety. Both the Russian Minister at Sofia and the Bulgarian Minister here represented the situation in very dark colours. According to them, public opinion was getting out of hand. The country was indignant at the apathy and inaction of the present pacific Ministry and might sweep them away at any moment. It believed moreover that the Powers while encouraging the grant of concessions to Moslem Albanians had entirely disinterested themselves in the fate of the Christians of Macedonia. General Paprikoff had also stated that, according to telegrams which he had received from Monastir, fresh bomb outrages were being planned, with the deliberate intention of provoking reprisals, that would in their turn force the hands of the Bulgarian Government and precipitate war.

Monsieur Sazonow remarked that, though not a pessimist by nature, he was seriously alarmed at the turn which events were taking. European intervention in the style in which it was practised in the days of Abdul Hamid was, he knew, out of the question: and it was equally impossible for the Powers to invite the Porte to give practical effect to the twenty-third Article of the Treaty of Berlin. But even if we could not hope to obtain any substantial concessions from Turkey, it was imperative for us to do something to convince the Balkan States that we have not altogether forgotten their kinsmen in Macedonia. Our first aim must be to tide over the next two or three months and to keep the Balkan States quiet by some means or another till the arrival of winter would remove the danger of war. The only way to do this was to inspire them with the belief that we were interesting ourselves actively on their behalf. He proposed telegraphing in the above sense to the Russian Representatives in London and Paris.

I enquired whether His Excellency contemplated entering into an exchange of views with the other Powers as well, so that, without having recourse to any collective action, we might approach Turkey with the full weight of the European concert, as Count Berchtold had suggested in his proposal.

His Excellency replied that Count Berchtold's proposal was purely academic in character and that he saw no advantage in waiting for Austria to take the whole matter into her own hands. Before saying anything to the Austrian and German Governments, England, France and Russia ought to consult together and to come

⁽²⁾ [v. B.F.S.P., Vol. 69, p. 758.]

to some understanding on the subject. It would also, he thought, be opportune, were they to consider what was to be done, should war break out in the Balkans, so as not to be taken unprepared. The situation was, in his opinion, most critical; and it was impossible to say what a single day might bring forth.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

MINUTE.

The passage about Austria's views on the Sanjak question is both interesting and reassuring.

L. M.
E. G.

No. 680.

Note communicated by M. de Fleuriau, August 30, 1912.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 37158/33672/12/44.

Ambassade de France, à Londres.

Il paraît désirable à M. Poincaré qu'une entente intervienne entre la France l'Angleterre et la Russie pour que des conseils tout à fait amicaux soient donnés à la Sublime Porte en vue de l'extension aux Chrétiens des Balkans des avantages faits aux Albanais. Ces conseils seraient formulés, non point collectivement, mais à peu près en même temps et dans des termes tels que le Gouvernement Ottoman n'aurait aucune raison d'y voir, de la part des Trois Puissances, la moindre idée d'une intervention dont il est essentiel d'éviter même l'apparence. M. Poincaré propose de faire donner des instructions aux Représentants des Trois Puissances à Constantinople.

30 Août 1912.

⁽¹⁾ [This communication was given by M. de Fleuriau to Sir L. Mallet on August 30. A copy was sent to Sir F. Bertie in Sir Edward Grey's despatch No. 435 of September 4. (F.O. 37158/33672/12/44.) A copy was also sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 681.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Barclay.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 36602/32869/12/44.

Tel. (No. 55.)

Foreign Office, August 31, 1912, 1.30 p.m.

Your telegram No. 32, C[on]f[idential], of Aug[ust] 30⁽²⁾: Turkey and Bulgaria.

You should inform the M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that I am fully alive to the difficulty of the position and appreciate his efforts to calm the agitation caused by the Kochana incident.⁽³⁾

I am convinced that the best hope for the future of Macedonia lies in the maintenance of peace and that Bulgaria would forfeit the sympathy of Europe by abandoning, at this moment, pacific policy.

The Porte have given the most categorical assurances that they intend to punish those guilty of the Kochana outrage—they have initiated an era of reforms, which they will be encouraged by the Powers to extend to the other Christian population!

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 377); to St. Petersburg (No. 795); to Vienna (No. 157); to Berlin (No. 153). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 658, No. 677.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 621, No. 626, and note ⁽³⁾.]

Continuance of warlike agitation on the part of Bulgaria will, it is to be feared, have the effect of encouraging the reactionary party in Turkey.

You should earnestly impress upon the M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] the unfavourable effect which would be produced here by any precipitate act on the part of Bulgaria and do all in your power to encourage H[is] E[xc]ellency to resist the pressure of the warlike party.

No. 682.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 36602/32869/12/44.

Tel. (No. 378.)

Foreign Office, August 31, 1912, 1.45 P.M.

My telegram No. 55 to Sofia (of Aug[ust] 31⁽²⁾): Turkey and Bulgaria.)

Inform Gov[ernment] to which you are accredited that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] are urging pacific counsels at Sofia.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Berlin (No. 154); to Vienna (No. 158); to St. Petersburg (No. 796)]

⁽²⁾ [v immediately preceding document.]

No. 683.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

St. Petersburg, August 31, 1912.

F.O. 36738/36484/12/44.

Tel. (No. 320.)

D. 9 P.M.

R. 11 P.M.

In conversation to-day the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs mentioned that the idea of a conference was very distasteful to him on general grounds; conferences were always dangerous, and often led to the very war they were intended to prevent. He particularly dislikes the prospect of Austria taking the lead, and thinks that if a conference is inevitable France would be the most suitable Power to propose it as being least directly interested in the Balkans. He said that the French Government, on the other hand, favoured the idea, especially as the French Minister for Foreign Affairs hopes that conference would meet in Paris.

No reference was made to exchange of views with the French Minister for Foreign Affairs reported in Paris telegram No. 112 of Aug[ust] 29,⁽²⁾ and his Excellency has not yet received Austrian note (see Vienna telegram No. 70 of Aug[ust] 29).⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Rome (as No. 282), to Constantinople (as No. 360); to Paris by bag]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 653-4, No. 671.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 655-6, No. 672.]

No. 684.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 36746/33672/12/44.

Paris, D. August 31, 1912, 11 P.M.

Tel. (No. 114.) R.

R. September 1, 1912, 8 A.M.

Your telegram No. 378 of to-day.⁽²⁾

Verbal communication in the desired sense made to the political director this evening. (End of R.)

(Confidential.)

Political director said that the French Government saw signs of great uneasiness in St. Petersburg in regard to the situation in the Balkans, and mentioned as an indication of this the proposal made yesterday by the Russian Embassy here urging an exchange of views between the three Governments and the advisability of holding out some hope to the Christian population of a betterment of their lot. Telegram acquainting the French chargé d'affaires with the views of the French Government has been sent for communication to you.⁽³⁾ Political director was inclined to suspect the Russian Government know something of which the French Government and His Majesty's Government are not aware, and hinted that it might be the Serbo-Bulgarian Convention.

He regards this convention as brought about by Russian policy, which was now alarmed at the prospect of being powerless to check the movement to which it had given the impulse. He felt pretty sure that the Austrian proposals, supplemented by the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs' visit to Roumania, were given effect as a counter-stroke to the policy represented by the Serbo-Bulgarian convention. It was essential to avoid a crisis, and England and France would have to help Russia out of her difficulty.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Berlin (as No. 161); to Vienna (as No. 165); to Constantinople (as No. 363); to Sofia (as No. 58)]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 662, No. 682.]

⁽³⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 661, No. 680.]

No. 685.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.

F.O. 36688/34661/12/44.

(No. 206.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 31, 1912.

The Italian Ambassador asked me about Count Berchtold's proposal. What did I think was his motive? I said the proposal was at present very vague and I doubted whether Count Berchtold had such a definite motive as the desire for an autonomous Albania under Austrian influence that had been attributed to him. We had expressed our willingness to exchange views but were waiting for some further communication to explain what Count Berchtold had in his mind.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 686.

Mr. Dering to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

Rome, September 1, 1912.

F.O. 36750/34661/12/44.

D. 5.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 102.)

R. 6.15 P.M.

Sir F. Cartwright's telegram No. 70 (Aug[ust] 29).⁽²⁾

Secretary-general, who had just seen Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, told me this morning that he had received from Austrian chargé d'affaires yesterday the note explaining proposals of the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs respecting European action towards Turkey. After reading the note secretary-general had come to the conclusion that its intentions were excellent, but the proposals amounted to nothing and would lead to nothing practical.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Berlin (as No. 160); to Vienna (as No. 164); to St. Petersburg (as No. 808); to Constantinople (as No. 362); to Paris by bag. A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 655-6, No. 672.]

No. 687.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

Constantinople, September 1, 1912.

F.O. 36737/36484/12/44.

D. 5.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 358.)

R. 9 P.M.

Paris telegram No. 112 (Aug[ust] 29).⁽²⁾

Suggestion of a conference would be most repugnant to the Ottoman Government, who would certainly reject it and feel strong resentment against the Power proposing it or forcing it on them. As to subjects for discussion outlined by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Turkish Cabinet would maintain that they are endeavouring to come to terms directly with Italy for the conclusion of peace and the question of Aegean islands, and they have adopted and are determined to pursue a conciliatory policy in Albania and other Balkan provinces. It is also difficult to see how the decisions of such a conference on Balkan problems could be enforced on Turkey. Some of the conclusions of the Berlin Conference following a disastrous war have never been carried out.

If the rivalry between the two groups of Powers is to be considered, I would point out that from the local point of view it would detract from the Triple Alliance if the first suggestion of a conference came from one of its members.

The Austrian proposals have already been used to attack the present Cabinet, and should a conference come to discuss internal affairs of the Balkan provinces (two groups undecypherable) the Ministry could scarcely agree to it without being driven from office by indignation of the army, Chamber, and press. A conference that would arouse among the native non-Turkish races, and, perhaps, also among Balkan States, expectations that may not be realised, would scarcely be a remedy for the present situation.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to St. Petersburg (as No. 807); to Rome (as No. 284); to Paris by bag. A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 653-4, No. 671.]

MINUTES

This is exactly what I feel on the subject. I spoke to M. Etter and M. de Fleuriau in the sense of the minutes approved by you with your addition, this morning.⁽³⁾ I impressed on them the importance of not giving publicity to this proposal and think it safer not to repeat these telegrams to Vienna or Berlin

L. M
[September 2.]

I approve.

E G.

(³) [*v. infra*, pp 666-8, Nos. 690-1]

No. 688.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey (¹)

F.O. 37092/38672/12/44.

Sofia, D. September 2, 1912.

Tel. (No. 34.) R.

R. September 3, 1912, 11 A.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 55 (Aug[ust] 31).⁽²⁾

I spoke to M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] to-day in the sense of your instructions strongly counselled patience and generally did my best to encourage him to resist pressure of warlike party. H[is] E[xcellency] replied that he had heard the same story from Russian and French Ministers but that daily growing warlike spirit in the army and King of Bulgaria's position had to be taken into account. The Gov[ernmen]t found themselves in a very difficult situation, it was a dilemma between peace within and peace without.

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] had just seen Austrian Minister who had told him that Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] was amplifying his proposals. This H[is] E[xcellency] argues amounts to waste of time since the Grand Vizier had already rejected them. Bulgaria had lost all faith in Turkey.

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] wondered whether the seriousness of the position was realised abroad and asked me to represent it to you again. I replied that I had already explained it fully. He repeated his vague statement that something must be done and he concluded with an assurance that he would do all in his power to maintain peace.

Sent to C[onstantino]ple.

(¹) [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 386); to Berlin (as No. 166); to Vienna (as No. 168); to St. Petersburg (as No. 815). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

(²) [*v. supra*, pp. 661-2, No. 681. *cp. infra*, pp. 677-9, No. 702.]

No. 689.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan. (¹)

F.O. 37055/38672/12/44.

(No. 296.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 2, 1912.

The Russian Chargé d'Affaires left with Sir L. Mallet on the 30th ult[imo] an aide-mémoire, copy of which is enclosed on the question of the Balkans.

He said that the Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] was alarmed at the situation which is developing amongst the Christian populations there, and was

(¹) [This despatch was repeated to Paris (No. 429). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

desirous of taking some action to calm them, but would like to know my views as to what could be said or done.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

Enclosure in No. 689.

Aide-mémoire communicated by the Russian Chargé d'Affaires.

30 Août, 1912.

Conformément aux renseignements venant de notre Ministre à Sofia, et aussi d'après le Ministre Bulgare à S[ain]t-P[éters]bourg,—l'opinion publique en Bulgarie se met de plus en plus en effervescence.

L'attitude du Gouv[ernemen]t Guéchoff vis à vis de la Turquie y est jugée comme n'étant pas suffisamment décidée et énergique et le Cab[ine]t se trouve placé dans une situation extrêmement difficile. Il peut facilement être contraint à céder la place à un autre,—qui serait sans aucun doute composé d'éléments politiques très peu désirables.

D'autre part,—les nationalités chrétiennes dans les Balkans commencent à se croire abandonnées à leur propre sort par l'Europe, et peuvent d'un moment à l'autre être amenées à recourir à des actes de terrorisme. Cet état de choses demande,—semblerait-il,—que des mesures promptes soient prises en vue de faire patienter les pays Balcaniques et les Chrétiens turcs—mesures capables de leur faire espérer à une amélioration prochaine de leur situation.

M. Sazonow pense qu'une démarche de nature à amener au moins un apaisement temporaire serait de rigueur,—afin surtout de prévenir tout conflit armé jusqu'au moment où les conditions climatiques rendrait pareil conflit impossible.

Sans formuler de propositions définies ou possibles, M. Sazonow voudrait savoir si les Gouv[ernemen]ts Britannique et français ne trouveraient pas nécessaire de procéder dès à présent à un échange de vues à ce sujet—pour ne pas être pris au dépourvu par les événements qui se précipitent et pour co-ordonner leurs manières de voir par rapport à la situation actuelle dans les Balkans.

No. 690.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 97163/83672/12/44.

(No. 480.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 2, 1912.

Sir L. Mallet made to the French and Russian Chargés d'Affaires this morning a verbal communication in explanation of my views on the situation in the Near East in reply to the request of the Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] for an expression of my opinion contained in the notice left here by M. Etter on the 30th ult[imo], copy of which was enclosed in my immediately preceding despatch of to-day.⁽²⁾

He subsequently forwarded to both copies of the statement which he had made with an intimation that it was to be regarded as a record of his observations and not as a written communication.

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch was repeated to Constantinople (No. 568). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v immediately preceding document, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

Sir L. Mallet said that I fully appreciated the difficulties of the situation and accepted the proposal of the Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] to exchange views on the subject.

I had always advocated the necessity of reforms for the Christian populations of European Turkey and thought the prospects in that respect more hopeful under the new Turkish Gov[ernmen]t than they had been for the last few years. I considered satisfactory the assurances given by the Turkish Ambassador at St. Petersburg and unofficially confirmed by the Turkish M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs], that reforms would be extended to all Christian populations and it was consequently more than ever necessary to do nothing which would diminish the prestige of the Turkish G[overnmen]t. I thought that the action of the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople in asking for a confirmation of their assurances was judicious. The Turkish Gov[ernmen]t should be given every encouragement to carry out this policy that this should be done privately and unofficially and all collective and simultaneous action at Constantinople should be avoided and the steps taken should not be made public. I was willing to speak in this sense to the Turkish Ambassador here but proposed not to instruct M. Marling to make any representation at C[onstantino]ple, though he might confer with M. de Giers on the situation.

I was ready in the meantime to join in recommending the Balkan States to keep quiet. I had already spoken in this sense at Sofia and would like to know whether Russian Gov[ernmen]t proposed to speak similarly at Belgrade.

I deprecated all talk of a Conference at any rate till the war was over as it would have a very disturbing effect at Constantinople. If a conference were held eventually there must first be a general agreement between the Powers as to proposals to be made and conclusions desired.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

No. 691.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 37163/33672/12/44.

(No. 307.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 2, 1912.

. . . .⁽²⁾ I readily admitted that reforms for the Christian populations were urgently necessary, and thought that, in some respects, the prospect was more hopeful than it has been for the last few years, as the Government actually in power in Turkey has granted reforms to the Albanians, and seems inclined to extend them to other populations.

The assurance given by the Turkish Ambassador at St. Petersburg to M. Sazonof, as communicated to Sir L. Mallet by Monsieur de Etter on the 20th ultimo,⁽³⁾ that these reforms would be extended to the other Christian populations, and the unofficial confirmation of this by the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, appeared to me to be highly satisfactory and made it the more necessary that nothing should be done at this moment to affect prejudicially the prestige of the Turkish Cabinet. I considered the action taken by the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople in asking for confirmation of Turkhan Pasha's statement judicious, and that the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs should be given every encouragement to carry out

⁽¹⁾ [The text given here is that of the *Confidential Print*, since besides this there is only a rough draft available.]

⁽²⁾ [The first three paragraphs of the despatch are identical *mutatis mutandis* with the corresponding section of the immediately preceding document.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 631, No. 643, *min.*]

his offer to lay the question before the Council and publish the result in the "Gazette," but that the greatest discretion should be used in the manner in which this is done, which should in my opinion be privately and unofficially. Anything in the nature of collective or simultaneous action by the representatives at Constantinople should be carefully avoided, and although I should be happy to instruct His Majesty's chargé d'affaires at Constantinople to confer with M. de Giers, I did not propose to instruct him to make any representation to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, as the reactionary parties in Turkey are looking out for an opportunity of accusing the present Cabinet of amenability to foreign pressure. I would, however, speak unofficially to the Turkish Ambassador here in the sense of recommending to the Cabinet to take the initiative without delay in some announcement which would reassure the Christian populations, and before the Powers were compelled to make any representations. I thought that it should not be allowed to become public that the three Powers had taken any action.

Some announcement on the part of the Porte should satisfy the Balkan States that their interests are not being neglected, but it must be remembered that if Turkish assurances were conveyed to Sophia, it would be looked upon as a guarantee by the Power conveying the assurance, and it might be more prudent to avoid anything of this nature.

In the meantime I was ready to join in recommending the Balkan States to remain quiet. I had already sent urgent instructions to Sophia,⁽⁴⁾ and would enquire whether the Russian Government proposed to make representations also at Belgrade.

I considered that any talk of a conference would be premature during the continuance of the war and was likely to have a disturbing effect at Constantinople, where political capital was already being made out of the rumours of European intervention. The guiding principle of a conference, if it were held eventually, should be that there must first be a general agreement between all the Powers, especially between those most directly interested, as to the proposals to be made and the conclusions desired, otherwise a conference might become worse than useless, for it might divide, instead of uniting, the Powers.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

(⁴) [*cp. supra*, p. 662, No. 681, and p. 665, No. 688.]

No. 692.

Lord Granville to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Berlin, September 3, 1912.

F.O. 37240/34661/12/44.

D. 8.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 103.)

R. 9.30 P.M.

Vienna telegram No. 70 (Aug[ust] 29).⁽²⁾

Austrian chargé d'affaires read a very long (group omitted: ? telegram) to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs yesterday, but refused to leave copy as he was instructed to make verbal communication.⁽³⁾ Secretary of State wrote a memorandum afterwards, which he was good enough to read to me this morning, but said he could not be certain of having remembered everything. His Excellency remarked confidentially that there was very little in it, the chief point being that the Powers should insist at Constantinople on the necessity for free and fair elections.

Communication began by reciting reception of original Austrian proposals by the various Powers: Germany and Italy had answered in a friendly manner, latter

(¹) [This telegram was repeated to Paris; to Vienna; to St. Petersburg; to Rome, to Constantinople and to Cettinje, the last paragraph only.]

(²) [*v. supra*, pp. 655-6, No. 672.]

(³) [*cp. O.-U.A.*, IV, pp. 387-9, No. 3744.]

merely making the obvious reservation that she could take no action at Constantinople; then Russia had accepted with the reservation against collective action; England had expressed readiness to exchange views; and finally France had accepted, adding that the Powers must insist on the concessions granted to Albanians being also granted to Christian populations. The rest of the communication has presumably been made to you in identic terms.⁽⁴⁾

Secretary of State also read to me a telegram he had sent on 1st September to Constantinople and Cetinje.⁽⁵⁾ instructing the German representatives to take similar action in whatever form they considered best when Russian and Austrian representatives were instructed to urge the withdrawal or demobilisation of the troops on both sides, preparatory to settlement of frontier question. His Excellency explained to me that he had only mentioned Russian and Austrian representatives because they were those to whom he knew such instructions were being sent.

MINUTE.

We may in return inform the Germans of instructions we have sent on the subject referred to in the last paragraph.

E. G.

⁽⁴⁾ [v. *infra*, pp. 686-7, No. 713.]

⁽⁵⁾ [v. *G.P. XXXIII*, p. 87]

No. 698.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

St. Petersburg, September 8, 1912.

F.O. 37286/34661/12/44.

D. 8.36 P.M.

Tel. (No. 324.)

R. 9.30 P.M.

My telegram No. 320 (Aug[ust] 31).⁽²⁾

Austrian Ambassador read Austrian note to Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday. The latter considers the suggestions of the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs excellent in theory, but quite impossible to realise in practice. He said that he would be ready to give them his warmest support if he thought they would lead to some definite result.

His Excellency was very relieved to learn that Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs did not wish for a conference, and at once telegraphed to Paris to the effect that conference was most undesirable from the point of view of the Russian Government.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Paris; to Berlin; to Vienna; to Rome; to Constantinople. A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 662, No. 688.]

No. 694.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*St. Petersburg, September 3, 1912.*

F.O. 37237/33672/12/44.

D. 8.38 P.M.

Tel. (No. 325.)

R. 10 P.M.

Minister for Foreign Affairs is still much disturbed over the situation in Bulgaria, and fears that Gueshof Ministry will not be able to resist the pressure of public opinion. If it falls he thinks probably Stamboulof party will succeed it and war become inevitable. His Excellency thought there was no time to be lost, we must do something as soon as possible and prove effectively our interest in the welfare of Christian races. It would suffice if we could point to the settlement of the Montenegrin frontier and the extension of reforms to the Christian population of the four vilayets. But he insisted on the necessity of the latter concession being made as publicly as possible—in an “Official Gazette,” for instance. The vain assurances of the Porte were not sufficient.

He fully concurred in the views expressed in your telegram No. 812 (Sept[ember] 2).⁽²⁾ Representations to the Porte might be made unofficially, but the result must be made public. His Excellency was very anxious that you should instruct Mr. Marling also to make representations at Constantinople in the sense in which you propose to speak to Turkish Ambassador in London.

Russian Government have spoken in the strongest fashion at Sophia and told the Bulgarian Government that in the event of war Russia would give them neither military nor diplomatic support, and warned them that they would have Austria and Roumania to deal with. Similar language had been held at Belgrade, and Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs told Mr. Henderson that Serbia had promised to make no movement without the consent of Russia. Bulgarian Government, however, were not so complaisant, and, in the event of war, Serbia would of course be swept into the flood.

MINUTES.

M. Sazonow is now alarmed at the situation which he himself has done so much to create.

I do not understand his argument. He says that pressure must be put on the Porte to announce extension of reforms to the Christian races while he considers the Austrian proposals which aim precisely at this, to be impracticable.

I venture to think that [it] is more important that the Powers should not act at Constantinople without each other's knowledge. Representations need not be collective but the Porte should see that all are agreed. M. Sazonow appears to contemplate action by the Triple Entente only and therefore Count Berchtold's proposals seem preferable.

H. N.

I made a communication to Djevad Bey this morning in your name and am strongly of opinion that nothing should be said by Mr. Marling. Djevad took what I said in good part but expressed the hope that similar remarks were not being made in Petersburg and Paris. I was able to reassure him on this point.—All our information points to improvement in Bulgaria and no one believes in war except M. Sazonow whose interest it is to lay stress on his fears. I do not think any reply is necessary.

L. M.

The Russian Ch[argé] d'Affaires might be informed verbally of what has been said to Djevad.

E. G.

He knows.

L. M.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 393); to Berlin (as No. 168); to Vienna (as No. 170); to Rome (as No. 288); to Constantinople (as No. 578); to Sophia (as No. 60); to Cettinje (as No. 56); to Belgrade (as No. 8). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced, as the information is given more fully in Sir Edward Grey's despatch No. 307 of September 2, *v. supra*, pp. 667–8, No. 691.]

No. 695.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 37772/34661/12/44.

(No. 272.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. September 3, 1912.

Sir,

R. September 9, 1912.

With reference to my despatch No. 269 of the 30th ultimo,⁽²⁾ as I was still too unwell to leave my bed to-day, I asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs to be good enough to receive Mr. Henderson, second secretary of this Embassy.

The latter accordingly saw Monsieur Sazonow this afternoon. His Excellency said that the Austrian Ambassador had called upon him yesterday and had read to him the Austrian note defining Count Berchtold's proposals. The note was in German and very long, and apparently Monsieur Sazonow had not fully grasped all its details. His Excellency had however gathered enough of its contents to state that he was theoretically in complete agreement with all the views expressed therein and he would be prepared to give them his strongest support if he thought there was any possibility of the action proposed having any practical results. Of this however he was convinced that there was not the least chance and he spoke contemptuously of the vanity of endeavouring to bring pressure on the Turks by means of what his Excellency termed "*représentations de salon*."

He said rather pointedly that, for want of anything better to say he had repeatedly assured Count Thurn that the proposals were excellent. He informed Mr. Henderson however that the suggestion which had seemed to him the most feasible was that for securing a fair and proportional representation for the Christian races in the coming elections.

Monsieur Sazonow was obviously greatly relieved to learn that the Austrian Government did not contemplate a Conference. On ascertaining this, he had immediately telegraphed to Paris to put an end once and for all to the mistake that had arisen there (see Sir F. Bertie's telegram No. 112 of August 29).⁽³⁾ In this connection His Excellency said that relations between himself and the French Ambassador here were still far from good and little misunderstandings between them were continually arising. He complained for instance that Monsieur Louis had on several occasions misrepresented his (M. Sazonow's) views to the French Government. The question of the Conference was a case in point. Monsieur Sazonow had never wished for a Conference. In the first place he realised that the Turks would be unlikely to agree to it and would in any case bear ill will to the Power that suggested it. He could see dozens of excellent reasons why a conference was most inadvisable and mentioned the last Russo-Turkish war as an instance when a conference had led to the very war which it was convoked to prevent. A conference would be a great evil but if it became inevitable a still greater evil would be a conference proposed by Austria. His Excellency did not state his reasons for thinking so but obviously he did not wish Russian prestige in the Balkans to be lowered by an Austrian monopoly in the initiation of proposals for the advantage of the Christian populations. Such were his feelings when Monsieur Louis called upon him about a week ago. He had explained, he said, as clearly to Monsieur Louis as he was doing on the present occasion that almost the last thing he desired was a conference but that "*s'il avait la certitude*" that Austria intended to propose one, rather than submit to such a calamity he would prefer to see a conference proposed by France. Monsieur Louis had entirely misconstrued his remarks and had telegraphed to Paris that Monsieur Sazonow was now in favour of a conference and would like the three Powers to come to an understanding as to its scope, &c.

(1) [Marked on the document "Seen at Berlin" A copy of the despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

(2) [*v. supra*, pp. 659-61, No. 679.]

(3) [*v. supra*, pp. 653-4, No. 671.]

Monsieur Sazonow continued for some time in this strain and was clearly rather bitter against Monsieur Louis. He stated that the French Government alone were anxious for a conference to take place partly no doubt because Monsieur Poincaré hoped that it would meet in Paris where he himself would play a leading rôle. Monsieur Sazonow however clearly resented the attempt which had been made to involve Russia in the proposal.

His Excellency said that he fully concurred in the views expressed in your telegram No. 812 of the 2nd instant,⁽⁴⁾ which Mr. Henderson read to him. He was however still much perturbed over the situation in the Balkans. He felt that the Gueschoff Ministry might at any moment be forced to resign by the pressure of public opinion and that if it fell it would probably be succeeded by one composed of Stambouloulists. In such an eventuality the King would be powerless and war would inevitably ensue. The situation was extremely critical and there was no time to be lost. The Powers must do something more than merely state their desire to help the Christian races. To allay the public excitement in Bulgaria they must show the tangible results of their good intentions. In Monsieur Sazonow's opinion there were two objects which if attained would be sufficient to cut the ground under the feet of Bulgarian militarism and keep the Balkans quiet till the first fall of snow cooled their passions. The first of these was a settlement of the Turco-Montenegrin frontier, and the second a *public* announcement of the intention of the Turkish Government to extend the concessions granted to the Albanians to the Christian population of the four vilayets. If the Powers could point to these two definite results of their goodwill the situation would be saved.

As regards the first Mr. Henderson mentioned to His Excellency the suggestion which had been made that the difficulty in the way of the ratification of the Montenegrin frontier settlement might be solved by the Turkish Government buying out the population of the Arzhenitza enclave (see Mr. Marling's telegram No. 354).⁽⁵⁾ Monsieur Sazonow had not heard of this proposal but said that he though it sounded both excellent and simple. He seemed however to mind little what means were employed so long as the desired end were attained.

As regards the grant of concessions to the Christians in Macedonia, His Excellency said that nobody in the Balkans put any faith in the mere assurances of a Turkish Minister and he laid much stress on the necessity of such a grant being made as publicly as possible, for example by means of a statement in an official gazette. To induce the Ottoman Government to do this pressure must be brought to bear upon them by the Powers. He had no wish to hamper the present Turkish Government in its scheme of reforms. He had no desire that the representations of the Powers should be made either collectively or officially or publicly. But it was vitally important that the Porte itself should make a public announcement of its intention to grant these privileges to the Christian races, and equally important that they should make it without any further delay. For that reason he was especially anxious that you should instruct Mr. Marling to use the same language at Constantinople that you proposed using to the Turkish Ambassador in London (see your telegram No. 812).⁽⁴⁾ No stone should be left unturned in the attempt to realise as soon as possible the two aims mentioned above. The time for mere pacific counsels had passed. Russia had used the strongest language possible both here and at Sofia and Belgrade. His Excellency stated that he knew that Serbia would take no initiative and was ready to be guided by Russia in the matter. But the tone of the Bulgarian Government was not so complaisant. The Russian Minister had warned the latter that if they made war at a moment when Russia disapproved of it, they would enter the lists at their

⁽⁴⁾ [Not reproduced. It reported the conversation more fully described in Sir Edward Grey's despatch No. 307. *v. supra*, pp. 667-8, No. 691.]

⁽⁵⁾ [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 36734/32869/12/44.)]

own risks. They would have to deal with Austria and Roumania, and Russia would not move a finger either diplomatically or politically or militarily on their behalf. But Monsieur Sazonow felt that Bulgaria was now out of control. Public indignation was running so strong that at any moment the dykes might give way (*les digues pourraient se rompre*) and the Balkans would be flooded with war. The King either could not or would not do anything to prevent it and Servia would of course be compelled to follow the Bulgarian lead.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

No. 696.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 37858/29861/12/44.

(No. 744.)

Sir,

Therapia, D. September 3, 1912.

R. September 9, 1912.

Since I wrote my despatch No. 725 of the 28th ult[imo]⁽²⁾ there has been little outward change in the position of the rival parties. The Grand Vizier, as I reported in my telegram No. 352 of the 31st ult.,⁽³⁾ appears to be at length alive to the necessity, if anything resembling freedom at the Elections next October is to be secured, of purifying the administration from the influence of the Committee, but His Highness is notoriously very much swayed by his son the Minister of Marine who with the other Committee adherents in the Cabinet, the Ministers of Evkaf and of Public Works, is working unceasingly if unobtrusively to restrain his new born zeal. There is no doubt also but that His Highness is himself fond of office, a weakness of which the Committee is not slow to take advantage, but if the power of the Salonica Junta is really to be broken, His Highness would probably best contribute to that result by resigning office and making room for a frankly non-Committee Cabinet under Kiamil Pasha. On the opposite side, pressure has been brought on Kiamil Pasha and his friends in the Cabinet, the Sheikh ul Islam and the Minister of War, to resign, in the hope that Ghazi Moukhtar Pasha would be obliged to do likewise, and that the Sultan would then call on Kiamil Pasha to form a Ministry. But Ghazi Moukhtar, so long as he retains the Sultan's confidence, would be inclined to find substitutes for them, probably with Committee proclivities, and it is probable that His Imperial Majesty, who is reported to believe that Kiamil Pasha's advent to office will be the signal for acts of violence on the part of the Committee, would show himself adverse to Ghazi Moukhtar Pasha's resignation. The only other possible candidate for the Grand Vizierate is Ferid Pasha, but for the last few days his name has rather dropped out, probably because the Albanian question has, as a matter of internal politics, lost much of its pressing importance.

Meantime the Cabinet has been busy preparing for an election free from illegitimate influences. Many of the Committee officials who took part in "making" the elections of last May, have been removed, and steps have been taken to undo the gerrymandering and other abuses that resulted in the annihilation of the Opposition in the late Chamber.

Great interest attaches to the Annual Congress of the Committee of Union and Progress which opened here yesterday to decide on its future line of policy. The decisions of the inner circles may not be known for some little time yet, but to judge

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It reported the changes in the Turkish Cabinet between August 20 and 22. (F.O. 36776/39861/12/44.)]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 36732/34661/12/44.)]

from the Articles that have recently appeared in the "Tanin," we may expect that the official programme will be one of uncompromising hostility to the Entente party, and therefore to the principles held to be represented by Kiamil Pasha and his friends. The attacks of the "Tanin" and other papers of like political complexion have of late been principally directed against the policy of the Cabinet in the Albanian and cognate questions. The concessions to be made to the Albanians, they say, must eventually be made not only to the other Balkan provinces but also to the Arabs, Kurds, Armenians and other nationalities, a policy which must entail the dismemberment of the Empire. The Berchtold proposals also have naturally provided a welcome peg for criticism of the Cabinet. They are represented as constituting an interference in Turkish internal affairs on the lines of Murzsteg and Reval, and the nation is warned against supporting a Cabinet which has brought Turkey to such a pass that European intervention, which was impossible so long as the Committee held the reins of power, can now be talked of.

Another and more insidious assault has been made by Talaat Bey, who is announcing that the efforts of the Committee of Union and Progress are now to be directed towards forming a lawful political party, but the intention is obviously merely to detach votes from the Ententists at the coming elections, and the Ikdam, in an anonymous Article, draws a slashing indictment of the record of the Committee in the last 3 years.

During the last week another political party calling itself the "Turk National Party" has appeared in the field. Its ostensible leaders are a Salonica crypto-Jew, a Cretan Mahommedan and other similar hybrids, and it professes to rally to the cause of Turkish nationalism the real Osmanli as a counterpoise to the Albanian, Arab, Greek, Armenian and other races. The new party, led by men presumed to be in collusion with the Committee, may be considered as having been created by the latter with a view to awakening the strong national sentiments of the hitherto dominant Turkish Caste, and so creating a counterblast to the conciliatory policy of the Ententists.

I have, &c.

CHARLES M. MARLING.

MINUTE.

The Committee has officially become a party since this despatch was written.

H. N.
L. M.
E. G.

No. 697.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Paget.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 37237/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 9.)

Foreign Office, September 4, 1912, 5 p.m.

You may support your colleagues in giving pacific advice to the Servian Gov[ernmen]t.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 396); to St. Petersburg (No. 827); to Berlin (No. 170); to Vienna (No. 173).]

No. 698.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Vienna, September 4, 1912.

F.O. 37394/34661/12/44.

D. 6.15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 78.)

R. 8.10 P.M.

Balkans.

Minister for Foreign Affairs told Mr. Russell this afternoon that all the Powers, with the exception of Great Britain, had now replied to his last proposals,⁽²⁾ and that these replies had all been of a favourable nature. Mr. Russell said he felt convinced that answer of His Majesty's Government, which was no doubt already on its way to Vienna, would be equally sympathetic to his Excellency's suggestions.

Minister for Foreign Affairs leaves for Buchlau on Friday morning to receive visit of German Chancellor.

MINUTES.

They were only communicated to us on Tuesday the 3rd and reached the S[ecretary] of S[tate] yesterday. I do not think that the French and Russian G[overnmen]ts have given their final answer. . . .⁽³⁾

L. M

[September 5.]

The papers I returned with my comments from Scotland⁽¹⁾ will have given material enough for an answer. "Acceptance with a reservation that Turkey's feelings must not be hurt," which is the German reply is not very different from ours.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 397); to St. Petersburg (as No. 830). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 686-7, No. 713.]

⁽³⁾ [This minute continues with the draft of a private telegram from Sir L. Mallet to Sir F. Cartwright acquainting him with the substance of the minute. Telegrams were subsequently sent to Paris (No. 398) and St. Petersburg (No. 831) on September 5, asking what answer the French and Russian Governments had given.]

⁽¹⁾ [The reference appears to be to a minute by Sir L. Mallet which formed the basis of Sir Edward Grey's telegram No. 176 of September 9, to Sir F. Cartwright (*v. infra*, pp. 681-2, No. 707). *cp.* also Sir Edward Grey's despatch No. 59 of September 10 (*v. infra*, pp. 686-7, No. 713), which was also based upon a minute by Sir L. Mallet.]

No. 699.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 37157/36484/12/44.

(No. 436.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 4, 1912.

The French Ch[argé] d'Aff[aires] informed Sir L. Mallet on the 31st ult[imo]⁽²⁾ that the Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] had made a communication to the French G[overnmen]t of his anxiety respecting the present situation in the Balkans, and had proposed that the 3 Powers should exchange views on the subject.

The French M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] had replied that he was quite disposed to exchange views as to the best way of avoiding a conflict and that this would be in accordance with the agreement made by the 3 Powers before the German Emperor's visit to Baltic Port.

M. de Fleuriau also stated that M. Sazonow was anxious lest Austria should be the first to propose a conference on the Near East and thought that the Triple

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 661, No. 680. The date should be August 30.]

Entente should not allow itself to be anticipated by the Triple Alliance in making this proposal.

M. Poincaré had replied that the multiplicity of questions to be settled would justify a Conference and that he agreed that the Triple Entente should take the initiative in proposing it.

M. de Fleuriau asked Sir L. Mallet's personal views and the latter replied that he thought that a Conference now would be out of the question but that it might become inevitable at the end of the war, although he considered that it might emphasise the points of difference between the two groups of Powers and lead to many serious difficulties arising between them.

M. de Fleuriau spoke of the general situation and Sir L. Mallet said that personally he rather regretted that there seemed to be a tendency to keep Austria and Germany out of the interchange of views between Great Britain, France and Russia about Bulgaria and Montenegro and that at this moment, it seemed to be rather a mistake that all the Great Powers should not act together.

M. de Fleuriau said that he was inclined to agree.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

No. 700.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 37295/32869/12/44.

(No. 304.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 4, 1912.

The Russian Chargé d'Affaires called at this Office on the 28th August⁽²⁾ and, under instructions, asked that I would make representations at Constantinople to induce the Turks to withdraw their troops from the frontier of Montenegro at once and ratify the Protocol of 1908.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 650, No. 667.]

No. 701.

Sir R. Paget to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 38832/19/12/44.

(No. 53.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. September 4, 1912.

R. September 16, 1912.

I saw Monsieur Yovanovitch the Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday and asked him for his latest news from Albania. He said that there appeared to be a momentary lull but he did not think it would last and if troubles broke out afresh they would be attributable to Count Berchtold's proposal which had so to speak been a direct encouragement to the Albanians. But apart from this there were to him unmistakable indications that foreign agents were at work to keep the country aflame. He asked me whether if Count Berchtold had been genuinely desirous of assisting the Turkish Government his proposal would have been given to the Press⁽²⁾ practically before it was communicated to the Powers interested. Any scheme he intended to propose naturally became more difficult of acceptance by the Porte if it had the

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 618-9, No. 622.]

appearance of being forced upon them and he should surely have sounded the Powers and the Porte first before publishing his idea to the world. The proposal had furthermore caused much disquiet in the Balkan States because these felt they should also be invited to a discussion in which they were so vitally interested and if they were not permitted to take part in it some arrangement or other would be made with Turkey which would certainly not suit them. This feeling to a large extent accounted for the popular excitement now manifesting itself in Bulgaria and Serbia.

I pointed out that popular feeling in Serbia did not appear to be very dangerous at present, that the attempted demonstrations had been failures and that a German newspaper reporter who had lately come from Sofia had told the German Chargé d'Affaires here that the importance of the great demonstration in Sofia over the Kotchana massacre had been much exaggerated; the number of people present had been more like five or six thousand than the thirty or forty thousand reported.

Monsieur Yovanovitch did not pretend that the demonstrations here had been very significant but warned me against being too optimistic. The present state of affairs in Turkey he said, was becoming intolerable and a solution would have to be found. If it were not found this year we should have the same thing all over again next year and he therefore rather thought the sooner the better. I then expressed to him the same hope as I had done a few days ago that Serbia would not try to force a solution⁽³⁾ to which he replied that Serbia certainly would not move, the Government had given Russia this assurance, he also did not think either Bulgaria or Greece would, Montenegro however might.

I have, &c.

RALPH PAGET.

(3) [In a conversation on August 25 Sir R. Paget told M. Yovanović that he "hoped the Servian Government would not allow themselves to be led into any rash adventure" Sir R. Paget to Sir Edward Grey, No. 52 of August 27, 1912, (F.O. 36849/36085/12/44.)]

No. 702.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 38811/33672/12/44.

(No. 89.)

Sir,

Sofia, D. September 5, 1912.

R. September 16, 1912.

I have the honour to report that on the 30th ultimo and on the 2nd instant I had lengthy conversations with the Minister of Foreign Affairs which confirmed the views I had expressed in my despatch No. 85 of the 28th ultimo⁽²⁾ on the disquieting state of affairs in this country. M. Guéchoff said that Bulgaria had never before been confronted with so serious a situation. All Bulgarians had been aroused by the Kotchana massacre, and the want of good faith on the part of the Turkish Government who had, contrary to their promises, not allowed the presence of a second Bulgarian member on the Committee of enquiry, and given the soldiers furlough so as not to appear as witnesses, had completed the exasperation. It was not so much the demonstrations in the streets that counted as the deep underlying feeling which pervaded all classes and conditions of the people. The army was quite loyal, but the warlike feeling which animated officers of every rank as well as the men was intense. One of the most disquieting features of the situation were the personal attacks made upon the Sovereign. His Majesty had been greatly perturbed by them.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 650-2, No. 668.]

Count Berchtold's visit to the King of Roumania⁽³⁾ at such a moment as this had also created the worst impression; the Bulgarian Government considered it almost a threat. Of all the Balkan States Bulgaria was the only one which could look back upon twenty-five years of undisturbed continuous peace at home. Servia had seen a change of Dynasty, Greece a military *pronunciamiento*, even Roumania had had a serious revolt to crush. Was Bulgaria's peace at home to be disturbed? That was the great question the Government had to solve. They were confronted with the dilemma, peace within or peace without.

M. Guéchoff said he could not for the present see the way out of the situation, but something must be done by the Powers to help Bulgaria. I endeavoured, but in vain, to extract from His Excellency the exact nature of Bulgaria's demands. All that I could gather was that he might in a few days "have something to ask."

M. Guéchoff also said that he feared he might not be able to maintain himself in office. To this I replied that I was convinced that His Majesty's Government would much regret if the pressure of events proved too strong for him, as they had considerable faith in his pacific policy. I laid great stress on the fact that His Majesty's Government did not want the peace of the Balkans disturbed. His Excellency concluded that it was precisely this wish for peace, which was that of all the Powers, which placed the Bulgarian Government in the serious dilemma they found themselves; pressure for peace from without, pressure for war from within.

On the 2nd instant, M. Guéchoff's official reception day, I spoke to His Excellency in the sense of the instructions you had sent me in your telegram No. 55 of the 31st ultimo.⁽⁴⁾ I said that you were fully alive to the difficulties of his position and appreciated his efforts to calm the agitation caused in Bulgaria by the Kotchana incident. That you were fully convinced that the best hope for the future of Macedonia lay in the maintenance of peace, and that Bulgaria would forfeit the sympathies of Europe if she abandoned her pacific policy at this moment. I pointed out to him that the Turkish Government had given most categorical assurances that they intended to punish those guilty of the massacre, that they were initiating an era of reforms, which the Great Powers would encourage the Porte to extend to all the other Christian populations; that the cordial reception accorded by the Powers to Count Berchtold's proposal to enter into conversation on the subject was the best proof of their good intentions. If, however, Bulgaria continued her warlike agitation, the reactionary element in Turkey would be greatly encouraged and the task of the Turkish Government as well as that of the Powers would be rendered still more difficult. I strongly counselled patience in awaiting the outcome of the efforts of the Powers, and said that surely the present Bulgarian Government must be strong enough in the country to be able to resist the warlike movement. M. Guéchoff replied that he had heard much the same story from the French and Russian Ministers; but what was he to do, King Ferdinand's position itself was in danger. The Austrian Minister had just left him and had informed him that Count Berchtold was now submitting his proposals to the Powers in a more definite form and that he hoped Bulgaria would facilitate their task. M. Guéchoff argued that the discussion of those proposals was a mere waste of time. After being apparently well received by the Porte they had been politely but categorically declined by the Grand Vizier as "*nulles et non avenues*." All future discussions of these proposals would consequently be fruitless. He had done his best to be on friendly terms with Turkey, but all in vain; Bulgaria had now lost all faith in Turkey.

In the course of the conversation I pointed out to His Excellency the grave dangers to which Bulgaria would be exposing herself in the event of war, and asked him whether they had carefully weighed the possibilities of Roumanian and Austrian intervention. To this he replied "But do you really think that the Emperor of Austria would at his age embark on war"; here he broke off, "don't let us talk of war." I heartily agreed adding that counsels of peace were the object of my errand.

(3) [v. *supra*, p. 648, No. 664.]

(4) [v. *supra*, pp 661-2, No 681.]

Reverting to the seriousness of the situation in Bulgaria, M. Guéchoff wondered whether it was realized abroad, and to my saying that I had explained it fully to you to the best of my ability, His Excellency asked me to represent it to you again. As I was leaving, M. Guéchoff repeated his vague statement that "something must be done," and concluded "in the meantime you can assure Sir Edward Grey that I will do all in my power to maintain peace."

Whilst the French Minister's counsels of moderation have been in the same strain as mine, the Austrian, German and Italian Ministers have given no moderating advice recently. The Russian Minister on the other hand used most forcible language. He told me that he warned M. Guéchoff that aggression on the part of any of the Balkan States would have the most dire consequences for the aggressor and that Europe would know how to extinguish any incipient conflagration. M. Guéchoff, whilst saying that he realized that pacific counsels were natural, hinted that perhaps in this case they might not wholly represent the views of the Russian Government. Whereupon M. Nekludow emphatically stated that the instructions he had received on this point were categorical and final. It appears that M. Guéchoff was considerably taken aback by the peremptory tone in which the message was delivered.

It should be noted that His Excellency has not been as confidential in his conversations with the other foreign Representatives as he has been with the Russian Minister and, in a lesser degree, with the French Minister and myself.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

MINUTES.

We cannot do much to help M. Gueshoff, but what we can do we are doing. His position is difficult.

Mr. Barclay carried out his instructions well and might be approved.

H. N.

Sept[ember] 18, 1912.

Approve Mr. Barclay.

A. N.

Approve certainly—he has handled the situation very prudently.

E. G

No. 708.

Sir R. Paget to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

Belgrade, September 6, 1912.

F.O. 37630/33672/12/44.

D. 2 P.M.

Tel. (No. 5.)

R. 3.30 P.M.

Russian Minister who has just returned from leave tells me that M. Pashitch yesterday telegraphed privately to the Servian Minister at Sofia instructing him to express hopes that Bulgarian Government would not give way to popular excitement and to request them not to lose sight of the danger threatening Servia from Austria in the event of a war.

Sent to Sofia.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 400); to Berlin (as No. 171); to Vienna (as No. 174); to St. Petersburg (as No. 835); to Constantinople (as No. 592). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 704.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾*St. Petersburg, September 6, 1912.*

F.O. 87635/34661/12/44.

D. 7.46 P.M.

Tel. (No. 331.)

R. 10 P.M.

Your telegram No. 831 Sept[ember] 5.⁽²⁾

Reply of Russian Government has so far been confined to the remarks made by Minister for Foreign Affairs to Austrian Ambassador when the latter read Austrian note to him.

His Excellency, I understand, merely took act of the communication, and expressed agreement in principles which note recorded—or, as my French colleague remarked to me, he replied to banalities with banalities.

Both Minister and Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs are absent, and will not be back here for another week.

MINUTE.

Our reply is pretty much the same and we can now give it. We have waited long enough

E. G.

There has been no delay. 4 days only.

L. M.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. This telegram enquired what answer the Russian Government had given to the Austrian proposals. (F.O. 87304/34661/12/44)]

No. 705.

Sir Edward Grey to Lord Granville.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 87240/34661/12/44.

Tel. (No. 178.)

Foreign Office, September 7, 1912, 3.15.

Your telegram No. 103 (of Sept[ember] 3⁽²⁾): Turkey and Montenegro), last paragraph.

You should thank S[ecretary] of S[tate], and may inform him that I sent similar instructions on Aug[ust] 30.⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 668-9, No. 692.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 659 No. 678, and note ⁽²⁾]

No. 706.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 87749/34661/12/44.

(No. 443.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 7, 1912.

The French Chargé d'Aff[aires] called on the 2nd inst[ant] and left with Sir L. Mallet a note, copy of which is enclosed, relative to action taken by the French

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch, with enclosure, was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] at Vienna with regard to the proposals of the Austro-Hungarian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] on the Balkan question.

Sir L. Mallet said that he was sure that I should be glad that M. Poincaré was anxious to maintain concerted action by all the Powers, as that was my view as had already been explained to M. de Fleuriau.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

Enclosure in No. 706.

Note communicated by M. de Fleuriau.

Ambassade de France, à Londres.

M. Poincaré a fait savoir à l'Ambassadeur de France à Vienne qu'il se réservait d'examiner les nouvelles propositions du Comte Berchtold avec la Grande Bretagne et la Russie. Il a autorisé M. Dumaine à laisser entendre que le Gouvernement français, fermement attaché à la Triple Entente, ne poursuit en Orient aucun dessein d'intérêt exclusif, et que le concours de toutes les Puissances lui paraît nécessaire à la solution des questions Balkaniques.

No. 707.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 38108/34661/12/44.

Tel. (No. 176.)

Foreign Office, September 9, 1912, 6.3 p.m.

(Proposals of Austro-Hungarian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] resp[ecting] the Balkans.)

I have caused the Austro-Hungarian Chargé d'Affaires to be informed that I am entirely in sympathy with the main objects of the policy of the Austro-Hungarian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs], as outlined in the communication made to Sir L. Mallet on the 3rd inst[ant]⁽²⁾ which I understand to be the maintenance of peace and of the political status quo combined with the extension of reforms to all the Christian populations.

From the communication made by the Grand Vizier to the Austro-Hungarian Amb[assado]r at C[onstantino]ple, which is confirmed from other sources, it appears to be the intention of the Turkish G[overnmen]t to proceed with administrative

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was drafted by Sir L. Mallet on September 6 in a minute addressed to Sir Edward Grey while he was in Scotland. It bears corrections in Sir Edward Grey's hand, the sentence in paragraph 3 beginning "I think the best course . . . under foreign pressure" being substituted by him for "I doubt whether it would be wise to do more than comment favourably on the policy, where opportunity offers."]

Sir L. Mallet's minute continued, from the point at which the telegram ends, with the following paragraph:—

"I am of opinion that, if the Gov[ernmen]ts of France and Russia return somewhat similar replies, that [*sic*] the conversations might fitly conclude. [Here Sir Edward Grey added 'for the present.'] I should be glad to have the views of the French and Russian G[overnmen]ts."

Sir Edward Grey endorsed the minute as follows: "The record of the reply when given to the Austrian Ch[argé] d'Affaires should go to the Cabinet with the record of the Austrian communication." (*v. infra*, pp. 686-7, No. 713.)

On September 9, Sir L. Mallet accordingly made the communication verbally to Count Trauttmansdorff, and the telegram to Vienna given above was repeated to Paris (No. 404); to Berlin (No. 174); to St. Petersburg (No. 844).]

⁽²⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 686-7, No. 713.]

reform and I therefore entirely agree with Count Berchtold in thinking the action of the Powers should be directed towards giving their moral support and individual encouragement to the Porte in the initiative which they have taken. I have already on more than one occasion expressed my sympathy with the Porte's intentions and my earnest solicitude on the subject of reform. I am in sympathy with C[oun]t Berchtold's desire for the impartial conduct of the Elections so as to ensure a more equitable representation of the various nationalities and, as the Turkish Cabinet are directing their efforts to secure the freedom of the Elections, I think the best course would be to take an opportunity of commenting with favourable emphasis on this policy: in this way the good intentions of the new Turkish Gov[ernmen]t will be strengthened without exposing them to the charge at the hands of their opponents in Turkey that they are acting under foreign pressure. I have myself already expressed to the Turkish Embassy my satisfaction on this point.

I appreciate C[oun]t Berchtold's object in initiating an exchange of views on the subject between the Powers and cordially desire to maintain complete co-operation in order that there may be harmony of action in any eventuality which might arise.

No. 708.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 38108/34661/12/44.

Tel. (No. 405.)

Foreign Office, September 9, 1912, 6.10 P.M.

My telegram No. 176 to Vienna (of to-day⁽²⁾): Proposals of Austro-Hungarian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] resp[ecting] the Balkans).

You may communicate the gist of this reply verbally to the M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs].

(To Paris and St. P[etersburgh] only.)

I am of opinion that, if the French and Russian Gov[ernmen]ts return somewhat similar replies the conversations on the subject might conclude for the present.

I should be glad to learn the views of the M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs].

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 845); to Berlin (No. 175)]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 709.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 38054/34661/12/44.

Tel. (No. 599.)

Foreign Office, September 9, 1912.

Sir L. Mallet spoke unofficially to Turkish Councillor of Embassy on Sept[ember] 4 by my instructions about situation in Balkans.

He said that I appreciated difficulties of present Turkish Gov[ernmen]t's position and the risk involved in anything like intervention, but situation of Christian population was intolerable and intervention some time or other could not be avoided unless Porte made it unnecessary.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 840); to Paris as an enclosure in Sir Edward Grey's despatch No. 449 of September 9, which was in the same terms *mutatis mutandis* as the telegram No. 841 to Sir G. Buchanan. (v. immediately succeeding document.) A copy of this telegram was also sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

The action of the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t during the last four years had been a great disillusion and all abuses had gone on as before revolution. I had however confidence in the intentions of the present Gov[ernmen]t which had been greatly increased by the reforms granted to the Albanians. Could not Gov[ernmen]t let it be known in some way that they intended to give reform to Christian races? I attached importance to Porte taking initiative and thus rendering official representations unnecessary.

I was glad to learn that steps were to be taken to secure impartiality of Elections.

This advice was entirely friendly and unofficial, and I hoped it would not be misunderstood.

Councillor said that he appreciated my intention but thought that Gov[ernmen]t would have difficulty in publishing anything about reforms and it would look like yielding to Austro-Hungarian pressure. They intended to extend reforms and were in complete accord with the Powers on the subject but latter would render programme abortive by making representations.

He would report to his Gov[ernmen]t what had been said but hoped there would be no joint representation.⁽²⁾

⁽²⁾ [Sir Edward Grey endorsed the record of this conversation as follows "I entirely approve what Sir L. Mallet has said—the record of his conversation with Djevad should go to the King and the Cabinet. E. G." Sir L. Mallet added a direction that the record of his conversation with M. de Etter on September 2 should also be sent to the King and the Cabinet if it had not been sent already (*cp. supra*, pp 666–8, Nos. 690–1.)]

No. 710.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.

F.O. 38054/34661/12/44.

Tel. (No. 841.)

Foreign Office, September 9, 1912.

My telegram No. 599 to Constantinople (of to-day⁽¹⁾: Balkan situation).

Inform Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] confidentially of substance and add that, in my opinion, any further representation would have an effect quite contrary to that which is desired.

⁽¹⁾ [*v* immediately preceding document.]

No. 711.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 38813/33672/12/44.

(No. 92.) Confidential.

Sofia, D. September 9, 1912.

Sir,

R. September 16, 1912.

In my despatch No. 85 of the 28th ultimo⁽²⁾ I had the honour to report on the circumstances which led up to the present warlike attitude of Bulgaria. I will now venture to offer some additional observations on the subject as well as on the general situation in the Balkans as seen from Sofia.

The massacre of Kochana was doubtless responsible for the violent outbreak of public feeling throughout Bulgaria, but it has been only an incident which did not

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 650–2, No. 668.]

cause but merely hastened on the crisis. For years past the feeling in Bulgaria has been that war with Turkey is inevitable. Most Bulgarian Governments have been at the best only on correct, never on friendly, terms with Turkey. When M. Guéchoff came to office, eighteen months ago, he resolved to do his utmost to place the relations of the two countries on a more friendly footing. But try as he would there was no response from the Turkish side. The Porte showed no enthusiasm in the settlement of any of the long outstanding questions pending between the two countries. The discouragement of so well-intentioned a Government as M. Guéchoff's can be readily understood. Then suddenly events in Turkey took a revolutionary turn, and the triumphal march of the Albanians confirmed the conviction that nothing could be obtained from Turkish Governments except by force. In this frame of mind Bulgarians suddenly heard that large numbers of their countrymen had been brutally murdered. They rose up in indignation, held meetings of protest, attacked the King's person publicly and urged the Government to fight or to go. If M. Guéchoff retired war seemed inevitable, so M. Guéchoff stayed to endeavour to restrain as far as possible the daily swelling tide of warlike feeling. But in the meantime he had changed his views, he is no longer the man who would rather abandon office than fight. If it comes to a question of war he will probably carry it on himself; he has the opinion of the whole country with him. He has blamed the organizers of the Meetings for their methods, but he has told them that the Government are as patriotic as they, and that they will do their duty, and that it must be left to them to choose the best time and means to act. The people have accepted this statement and are now waiting to see what M. Guéchoff will do. They say they want the lot of their brethren assured in Macedonia, but what they really want is the Autonomy of Macedonia.

The man in the street only sees the state of anarchy in Turkey, the success of Albanian methods, the war with Italy and wishes to obtain some concessions from the Porte whilst Turkey's hands are full. How much more reason have those in power to think that the present opportunity is favourable, knowing as they do that if it came to fighting they would have the support of Serbia, Greece and Montenegro and until last week they imagined that they could count upon even that of Russia. They were almost entitled to believe this, for it was Russia who had reconciled Bulgaria to Serbia, and Bulgaria to Greece; it had not been an easy task, and only accomplished on the personal intervention of the Emperor of Russia himself. Under the circumstances therefore it was perhaps only natural that they should expect Russia to assist them in their hour of need. Even in spite of the categorical declarations of Russia that she will in no way help Bulgaria and Serbia there lurks a feeling that Russia cannot abandon them should, once the Balkan States move, Austria threaten Serbia. They cannot believe that Russia could look on with her arms folded, for it would be the abnegation of Russia's policy in the Balkans, the abandonment of the Slav races to Austria.

It is clear that the question is a duel between Russia and Austria. Russia's rehuff has been a bitter blow to Bulgaria and Serbia, it will also be a blow to her own prestige unless she finds means to uphold it. Much reliance is also placed here on the sympathies of England and France for Russia and on their own anti-"*Drang nach Osten*" policy. Russia has successfully gathered Bulgaria and Serbia to her side to act as a barrier against Austria's advance to the *Ægean* Sea; but should she fail these two Balkan States there will be nothing left for them as last resort but to endeavour to come to terms with her rival. Serbia would possibly, in exchange for political guarantees for herself and the Serbo-Croats, consent to incorporation in the Dual Monarchy, a solution of the Servian question contemplated by some of the ablest Servians themselves. Whilst Bulgaria, though she might succeed in obtaining some slight territorial compensations, would have to give up for ever all ideas of the Greater Bulgaria of San Stefano and be contented to play the role of a second Roumania.

The danger of the situation really lies in the fact that neither Bulgaria nor Serbia can believe that Russia could abandon her policy of centuries in the Balkans

without even an attempt at resistance. The Balkan States have been brought together by Russia—true for a defensive purpose—but defensive and offensive are terms much akin under certain conditions. They are now working together and, once they are quite ready and think the moment opportune, it is not the withholding of loans by France, nor the admonitions of Russia nor of the whole of Europe that will hold them back. They care little whether they bring about a European war or not. A change of Government here might have for effect the destruction of the system of Ententes collaborated with so much difficulty, and such an opportunity as the present might never occur again. Their present policy, I am told, is to wait for the internal state of Turkey to become even more chaotic than it is now and then to back up their demands by force of arms. But they think that the moment should not be delayed too long. They argue that the present is almost as favourable as it will ever be, they count upon the Emperor of Austria's desire not to be drawn into war at his age, while they feel apprehension of his successor's intentions, and, moreover of the fact that the strength of the Austrian army will almost be doubled in a few years. Last March, when in Belgrade, I reported that the Servians had on more than one occasion during the winter unofficially offered their services to the Italians who had politely and firmly refused them.⁽³⁾ Judging from the manner in which the continuance of the war is welcomed here, I am not sure that a fond hope is not cherished that Italy, weary of her efforts, may come to terms with the Balkan States to deal a death blow to Turkey.

The calm at present is relative, the people and the army are in expectancy of what the Government will do. Much is going on behind the scenes, preparations are being made, plans discussed. It is not only in Sofia nor in Belgrade that the spark may be struck which will set the Balkans aflame, Athens also is a dangerous "foyer."

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

MINUTE

This is an ably written despatch.

A. N.
E. G.

(3) [v. *supra*, p. 563, No. 565.]

No. 712.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 38190/34661/12/44.
Tel. (No. 118.)

Paris, D. September 10, 1912, 10.56 P.M.
R. September 11, 1912, 8 A.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 398 of Sept[ember] 5.⁽²⁾

Following is the gist of reply made verbally by the M[inister for] F[oreign] Affairs] to the Austrian Chargé d'Affaires.

French Gov[ernment]t have already recommended to the Turkish Gov[ernment]t in a friendly way to extend concessions granted to the Albanians to the other Balkan races. Porte replied that it was disposed to act in that sense.

(1) [This telegram was sent to St. Petersburg (as No. 850); to Berlin (as No. 178); to Vienna (as No. 179); to Rome (as No. 297); to Constantinople (as No. 602). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

(2) [Not reproduced. This telegram inquired what reply the French Government had given to the Austrian proposals. (F.O. 37394/34661/12/44.)]

French Gov[ernmen]t share the views of the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t in regard to the elections and steps to be taken at Constantinople to ensure their impartiality and secure equitable representation of the various nationalities but consider that advice to be given to the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t ought to avoid all appearance of interference in internal affairs.

[ED NOTE.—The following despatch to Sir F. Cartwright was based upon a long minute written by Sir L. Mallet on September 8, the same day as the interview it records. The minute was sent to Sir Edward Grey, and he made a number of marginal comments. As some of these are of considerable interest, it has been thought desirable to print them below as notes to the final draft

Sir Edward Grey wrote the following minute at the end of the report from Sir L. Mallet on which the despatch was based: "My marginal notes combined with what I have previously said about just administration by Turkey and prevention of incidents such as Kochana massacres and punishment of the guilty parties in the Kochana affair will enable Sir L. Mallet to exchange views with the French and Russian representatives upon Count Berchtold's proposal and to finish the conversation with the Austrian Chargé d'Affaires. E. G. 4 9.12."

No. 713.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 38109/34661/12/44.

(No. 59.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 10, 1912.

The Austro-Hungarian Chargé d'Affaires called at this Office on the 3rd inst[ant] to make orally the further communication from the Austro-Hungarian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] respecting the question of the Balkans which I had been led to expect.

Count Trauttmansdorf began by informing Sir L. Mallet, who received him, of the gist of the replies returned to Count Berchtold's original communication by the other Powers and went on to state that he wished me to understand that Count Berchtold disclaimed entirely any self-seeking motives in the initiative which he had taken and that H[is] E[xcellency] did not wish to assume the lead either in making representations to the Sublime Porte or in a conference, if one should take place. H[is] E[xcellency] did not propose a conference and Sir L. Mallet gathered that he did not see the utility of one.⁽²⁾ His intentions were entirely peaceful and his one object was the maintenance of the *status quo*.

Count Berchtold's object had merely been to bring the Powers into line, no discussion having taken place for some years on the subject of the Balkans. If all the Powers were agreed in the main as to the general policy to pursue the means of giving effect to it could also be discussed, but he wished to lay great stress on his desire to avoid hurting the feelings of the Sublime Porte and arousing their suspicions or susceptibilities. Any step which they might interpret as dictation would do more harm than good and H[is] E[xcellency] accordingly disclaimed the idea of collective action either at Constantinople or at the capitals of the Balkan States.⁽³⁾

If the Powers were agreed on the policy of encouraging Turkey in the path of reform, the right mode of procedure would be that recently adopted in Cettinje,

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ ["This should relieve M. Sazonow's mind. [E. G.]"]

⁽³⁾ ["All this I cordially reciprocate and think shows a very just appreciation of the situation. [E. G.]"]

namely, the offer of advice by the Powers individually.⁽⁴⁾ Intervention had proved a failure in the past and some other way must be found.

Count Berchtold thought that the way should be by encouragement whenever an opportunity offered. He did not propose to provoke the initiative but to give moral support to the initiative of Turkey.⁽⁵⁾

The Grand Vizier had informed the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at Constantinople that the reforms granted to the Albanians would be extended to the Christian races of European Turkey and the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t should be encouraged to pursue this policy.

It would be useful that that Gov[ernmen]t should realise that Europe was united in desiring peace, contentment in the Balkans and the maintenance of the *status quo* and Count Berchtold believed that the step which he had taken had already had a good effect⁽⁶⁾ and that the present *détente* had its origin in his proposals.

Count Berchtold was of opinion that by way of concrete reforms the nationalities of Macedonia should be given a chance of participating in public life, which could be done by ensuring the impartiality of elections,⁽⁷⁾ and that the *conseils généraux* should be reestablished in the vilayets.

Count Berchtold did not wish to lay down the law but merely to consult the Powers, but he asked whether the population should not be represented "in accordance with their ethnical situation." He considered it to be of the highest importance that the different nationalities should be properly and justly represented in the Turkish Parliament⁽⁸⁾ by members who could bring forward their grievances and make proposals, and he pointed out that if the Bulgarians had been so represented most inconvenient questions would have been asked about the massacre at Kochana and indeed such an incident would not have occurred.

Count Berchtold asked how far the Powers could encourage the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t to follow this line with special reference to the coming elections and how far could they urge the adoption of this policy without doing harm.

Sir L. Mallet said that he had heard this communication with the greatest interest and would at once report it to me. He could assure Count Trauttmansdorf that I deeply sympathised with the objects which Count Berchtold had generally in view, namely, the maintenance of peace and of the *status quo*, that I had greatly at heart the question of reform, and that I shared Count Berchtold's hesitation as to what step could be taken at this juncture in furtherance of the Porte's expressed intention.

Sir L. Mallet personally doubted whether it would be prudent to say anything about the elections because the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t were already exerting themselves to secure impartiality in them.⁽⁹⁾ The question was moreover very difficult from more than one point of view.

[I am, &c.

E. GREY.]

(4) ["I agree. [E. G.]"]

(5) ["Agree. [E. G.]"]

(6) ["I can't endorse this altogether but nothing should be said on this point. [E. G.]"]

(7) ["This point I agree to it was the gross unfairness of the last Elections that upset the C[ommittee of] U[nion and] P[rogress] Gov[ernmen]t. [E. G.]"]

(8) ["It would be dangerous to allocate representation by nationalities—the feuds between Bulgars and Greeks etc. might break out again; impartial elections should be enough. [E. G.]"]

(9) ["We could comment favourably to the Turks on this and encourage them. [E. G.]"]

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Paris, September 11, 1912.

F.O. 38289/34661/12/44.

D. 5.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 120.) Confidential.

R. 8 P.M.

Balkans.

I have given French Minister for Foreign Affairs a full account of your reply to Austrian proposals (see your telegram No. 176 of 9th September⁽²⁾ to Vienna). He states that his answer was to the same effect. He concurs in view expressed in your telegram No. 405 of 9th September⁽³⁾ that the conversations on the subject might stop for the present.

I have also communicated to Minister for Foreign Affairs a memorandum of the conversation between Sir L. Mallet and the Councillor of Turkish Embassy in London.⁽⁴⁾ I suggested to Minister for Foreign Affairs that, though it was intelligible that Russia, as the self-constituted protector of the Balkan Christians, should, through fear of Austria arrogating to herself that position, be desirous of putting pressure on Porte in favour of the Christians, it would not be to the advantage either of France or of England that they should join with Russia in such a proceeding, for it would irritate Mussulman opinion and be resented in Algeria, Tunis, and Morocco and in India, and indispose Turkish Government to be conciliatory to their Christians from fear of being thought by the Turkish Mussulmans to be acting under pressure from the Christian Powers.

Minister for Foreign Affairs said that he fully appreciated the danger of putting pressure on the Porte, and he had pointed this out to Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs when he and M. Isvolsky found fault with the French Government for not being sufficiently pro-Italian to suit the ideas of Russian Government. He told them that French Government, however much their sympathies might be in favour of Italy, desired for high political reasons to observe a strict neutrality in Turco-Italian war, for France had large interests of all kinds in the Ottoman Empire. He has spoken to the same effect in regard to Balkan question, and he has no intention, though France is the ally of Russia, to be dragged into endangering French interests by ill-advised action at Constantinople.

Minister for Foreign Affairs is much preoccupied by present state of affairs in the East. The King and Government of Bulgaria are anxious to maintain peace, but the Ministry may disappear or be forced, as well as the King, for personal reasons, to give way to the agitation in the army and country to go to war. His Excellency thinks that the Turkish Government are most anxious to be conciliatory with Bulgaria, but that, if they make a *casus belli* with Greece on the question of Cretan deputies taking their seats at Athens, Bulgaria will certainly join Greece against Turkey (see my immediately preceding telegram Sept[ember] 11.⁽⁵⁾)

I asked Minister for Foreign Affairs whether fear of Roumanian action and of resentment of Russia if her peaceful counsels were not attended to would not restrain Bulgaria. He thinks that the feeling in Bulgaria would be that if Bulgaria were victorious Russian public opinion would force Russian Government to be with Bulgaria, and that if Bulgaria were defeated the same public opinion would insist on Russian Government intervening to prevent Bulgaria from being squashed.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Berlin (as No. 181); to Vienna (as No. 180); to St. Petersburg (as No. 856); to Rome (as No. 300); to Constantinople (as No. 605). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 681-2, No. 707.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 682, No. 708.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 682-3, No. 709.]

⁽⁵⁾ [Not reproduced, as the contents are sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 38288/28810/12/44.)]

No. 715.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Vienna, September 11, 1912.

F.O. 38294/34661/12/44.

D. 8.15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 74.)

R. 9 P.M.

Your telegram No. 176 (Sept[ember] 9).⁽²⁾

Minister for Foreign Affairs read to me to-day the telegram from Austrian chargé d'affaires in London containing substance of your communication to him on the subject of his Excellency's proposal. It tallies with your above-mentioned telegram to me. Minister for Foreign Affairs expressed himself to me as highly satisfied at manner in which you had received his proposals for joint discussion of Balkan affairs by the Powers, and agrees with you that in giving advice to Turkey every care should be taken to avoid hurting her susceptibilities.

On my asking Minister for Foreign Affairs whether he intended to continue the conversations and make further proposals he replied in the negative, and added that he would wait to see what developments might occur in the Balkans. He was satisfied for the moment at having achieved this, that the Powers were now ready to discuss without loss of time any complications which might suddenly arise in the Near East.

MINUTE.

We do not want the conversation to advance.

L. M.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Berlin (as No. 180); to Rome (as No. 299); to St. Petersburg (as No. 852); to Constantinople (as No. 602). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 681-2, No. 707.]

No. 716.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 38726/34661/12/44.

Tel. (No. 337.)

St. Petersburg, September 14, 1912.

Your telegram No. 841 (Sept[ember] 9).⁽²⁾

Minister for Foreign Affairs seemed at first to favour some representation on our part at Constantinople, but, on my pointing out how necessary it was for us to do nothing to add to the difficulties of the new Turkish Government, his Excellency expressed assent and did not press matter. He told me that he had reason to know that both Germany and Austria were working hard for the return of the Committee of Union and Progress to power.

Your telegram No. 845 (Sept[ember] 9).⁽³⁾

(?) Minister for Foreign Affairs said that he had used very similar language to the Austrian Ambassador here. He did not express any wish for a continuation of the conversations for the present.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Berlin (as No. 188); to Vienna (as No. 188), to Constantinople (as No. 617). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 683, No. 710.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 682, No. 708, note ⁽¹⁾.]

No. 717.

Lord Granville to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*Berlin, September 17, 1912.*

F.O. 39170/33672/12/44.

D. 12.46.

Tel. (No. 114.)

R. 2.45.

Balkans.

S[ecretary] of S[tate] for F[oreign] A[ffairs] asks me to tell you that though he has himself received no disquieting reports he had been informed both by Russia and Austria that those Gov[ernmen]ts are very anxious as to the situation in Bulgaria and Servia who they think have come to terms and mean to fight. S[ecretary] of S[tate] is strongly of the opinion that Powers should agree as soon as possible as to steps to be taken to localize trouble should it break out. M. Sazonow has hinted this to him and he has replied expressing strong approval and urging Russia to take the initiative and make proposals. S[ecretary] of S[tate] thinks it would be far more useful, if instead of repeating our good advice which is getting stale, all the Powers could tell the Balkan States definitely that all arrangements are made for localisation and that if they choose to fight they will have to fight it out and take the consequences.

MINUTES.

If another untoward incident occurs in Macedonia the Bulgarians will probably be unable to restrain themselves but will fall on Turkey and Servia will join in. No warning from the Powers is likely to stop this. I presume however that we should not refuse to act with Russia should she make proposals, and that we may expect shortly to receive these from St. Petersburg.

H. N.

Sept[ember] 17, 1912.

I don't think that the proposed communication is likely to stop the Balkan States from fighting. I should like to have the view of the Ch[argés] d'Affaires at Constantinople, Sofia and of Sir R. Paget and also those of the French and Russian Gov[ernmen]ts, before replying to this telegram; if it is necessary to reply.

I cannot think it likely that Bulgaria means to fight now, and rather expect that M. Sazonow is being led into a trap.

L. M.

A. N.

We might safely reply that we are entirely in favour of an agreement between the Powers that would prevent complications between them if trouble breaks out but I will deal with this to-morrow.

E. G.

18.9.12.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 417); to Vienna (as No. 185); to St. Petersburg (as No. 871); to Rome (as No. 308); to Constantinople (as No. 636); to Sophia (as No. 61); to Belgrade (as No. 11). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 718.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 39257/33672/12/44.

St. Petersburg, D. September 17, 1912.

Tel. (No. 339.)

R. September 18, 1912, 11.30 A.M.

Bulgarian Minister told Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] to-day that unless Powers took Macedonian question in hand and induced Turkey to inaugurate

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 420); to Berlin (as No. 190); to Vienna (as No. 186); to Constantinople (as No. 630); to Sophia (as No. 62); to Belgrade (as No. 12); to Cettinje (as No. 60); to Athens (as No. 161). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

serious reforms war was inevitable. Bulgaria he said demanded application of Article 77 of Treaty of Berlin.⁽²⁾

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] spoke to him most seriously saying that a Great Power like Russia could not allow herself to be dragged into war at the bidding of Bulgaria, that she had liberated Bulgaria and given her independence and that if Bulgaria was mad enough to embark on war contrary to her expressed wish she would do so at her own risk and peril and Russia would regard her Historic mission as at an end. What, His Excellency asked, would be position of Bulgaria at the end of war. She would not be allowed to retain any portion of Turkish territory, and would be faced with a revolution.

Bulgarian Minister replied that revolution would come at once if his Government remained inactive. They would proclaim at the commencement of war that their sole object was to procure some amelioration of the lot of their kinsmen in Macedonia and not an aggrandisement of territory.

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] has begged Turkish Ambassador to urge on his Government to do something at once on their own initiative and has suggested reform of administration of Justice and representation of Christian element in the administration. He is instructing the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople to speak in the same sense. He is also sending a circular telegram to Russian Ambassadors in the other capitals. He has spoken to Austrian Chargé d'Affaires begging him to tell Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that he has no desire to poach in his preserves and that the step which he is taking is merely outcome of the recent Austrian proposals and is forced on him by the seriousness of the situation. His Excellency expressed desire that Russia and Austria as the two Powers the most directly interested should agree to pursue a policy of complete disinterestedness. His Excellency is very anxious that H[is] M[ajesty's] Representative at Constantinople should be instructed to speak in the same sense as the Russian Ambassador. Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] has reason to believe that Bulgaria will not move for another 3 or 4 weeks and will not do so even then unless she is assured of cooperation of other Balkan States. He is consequently instructing the Russian Ministers at Belgrade and Cetinje to use all their influence to restrain Serbia and Montenegro. He hears that Turkey is inclined to keep Greece quiet by concessions in Crete.

(2) [sic. The reference should be to Article 23. *cp. infra*, pp. 603-5, No. 722. *r. B.F.S.P.*, Vol. 69, p. 758.]

No. 719.

Telegram from M. Sazonov to Count Benckendorff.⁽¹⁾

September 17, 1912.

F.O. 39549/38672/12/44.

Confidential.

J'ai eu hier la visite du Ministre de Bulgarie. Mon entretien avec lui m'a laissé l'impression que si les Puissances n'obtiennent pas de la Turquie satisfaction pour les vœux des Bulgares qui visent en substance la réalisation pour la Macédoine des réformes promises par l'art[icle] 23 du Traité de Berlin, l'ouverture des hostilités entre la Bulgarie et la Turquie est inévitable.

J'ai répété tous les arguments dont nous avons déjà fait usage militant contre une action Bulgare. J'ai insisté sur leur poids et j'ai attiré sans réticence aucune l'attention du Ministre sur les conséquences désastreuses pour la Bulgarie qui peuvent

(1) [This communication was sent by Count Benckendorff to Sir A. Nicolson on the evening of September 18 enclosed in a private letter. The letter has not been traced. A copy of the communication was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

être le résultat du parti irréfléchi que, sous l'influence des comités macédoniens, la Bulgarie paraît aujourd'hui disposée à prendre.

Il m'a paru que mes paroles n'ont pas laissé d'impressionner le Ministre.

Il m'a promis de les transmettre textuellement à Sofia.

Après M. Paprikoff, je reçus l'Ambassadeur de Turquie que j'ai mis au fait de la nervosité extrême qui dominait en Bulgarie. J'ai mis de l'insistance à développer à l'Ambassadeur la nécessité pour la Turquie pour obvier à des complications sérieuses, de prendre en main, sans plus de retard, l'œuvre de l'introduction en Macédoine de réformes qui garantiraient aux populations Chrétiennes leur sécurité personnelle et celle de leur propriété, l'égalité devant la loi et pour chacune des nationalités une participation à l'œuvre de l'organisation et du gouvernement.

En vue de ce qui précède, aussi des nouvelles alarmantes qui nous parviennent des États Balkaniques et de la nécessité évidente de ne négliger aucun effort pour prévenir le danger de guerre dans les Balkans, le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique ne jugerait-il pas utile et opportun de faire entendre à Constantinople par la voix de son Ambassadeur sous forme tout amicale et excluant le caractère d'une démarche identique, des représentations dans le sens de ce que j'ai dit à l'Ambassadeur de Turquie.

Veuillez Vous en informer auprès de Sir Edward Grey.

No. 720.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Sofia, September 18, 1912.

F.O. 39383/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 36.)

D. 5.10 P.M.

R. 9 P.M.

Minister for Foreign Affairs told me yesterday in the course of conversation that the situation, under appearance calm, was not improving, and that warlike movement in the army continued to increase.

The time-expired men were not disbanded as usual on 14th September. I learn also that all other military precautions short of mobilisation are being taken. There does not, however, seem to be any likelihood of outbreak of conflict before three or four weeks.

(Sent to Constantinople.)

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Berlin (as No. 191), to Vienna (as No. 187); to St. Petersburg (as No. 881); to Rome (as No. 810); to Belgrade (as No. 13); to Cettinje (as No. 61); to Paris by bag. A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations. *cp. infra*, pp. 696-7, No. 724.]

No. 721.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 39344/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 130.) Confidential.

Paris, D. September 18, 1912, 11.35.

R. September 19, 1912, 11.

Russian Ambassador has this afternoon made a fresh proposal on behalf of Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] to French M[inister for] F[oreign]

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Berlin (as No. 192); to Rome (as No. 812); to Vienna (as No. 188); to Constantinople (as No. 635); to Sophia (as No. 63); to Belgrade (as No. 14); to Cettinje (as No. 62); to St. Petersburg (as No. 882). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

A[ffairs], viz.; that Powers should advise Porte in an amicable manner in order to deprive Bulgaria and Servia of any pretext for war, to grant to Bulgarians of Turkish provinces the moral and material advantages contemplated in Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin.⁽²⁾

French M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] told M. Isvolsky that he would like to have some definite statement in writing for consideration but that he did not think it at all likely that either the Porte would accept such advice if given or that German or British Governments would join with Russia in giving it in present circumstances.

With regard to localisation of the war if Bulgaria and Servia make an attack on Turkey which Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] apprehends French M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] pointed out to M. Isvolsky that Russia and Austria with the concurrence of Germany may be able to (group omitted. ?take) measures of persuasion which are not available for France and England.

MINUTE.

I do not think this a very practical proposal of M. Izvolski. The Turks have already given evidence of good intentions as regards Macedonian Bulgars and would certainly resent such advice. They could reply with much justice by asking why they alone were not allowed to break the Treaty of Berlin.

Moreover, such a representation would weaken the present Turkish Gov[ernment]t by giving a weapon to the Committee and reactionaries which is just what we want to avoid.

H. N.
Sept[ember] 19, 1912.
A. N.

(2) [For the text of this Article, v. B.F.S.P., Vol. 60, p. 758.]

No. 722.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 39781/33672/12/44.

(No. 283.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. September 18, 1912.

R. September 23, 1912.

Monsieur Sazonow returned to St. Petersburg on the 13th instant and in a conversation which I had with him on the following day His Excellency informed me that the latest reports which he had received from Sofia were to the effect that, even were the present crisis to pass over without a rupture of the peace, war would inevitably break out in the spring. It would be something, he said, to secure such a respite, as the Powers might, in the meanwhile, take preventive measures or at all events arrange to localise the war, should it break out. He knew that he could count on the co-operation of the Governments in London, Paris and Berlin and, though he could not himself go to Vienna, Austro-Russian relations were now on such a footing that he could always exchange views with Count Berchtold.

I remarked that I did not quite share the view that, if war did not break out within the next few weeks, it would necessarily be postponed till the spring of next year. During the crisis of 1908-1909 the Bulgarians had rather favoured the idea of a winter campaign, as their troops were better fitted to endure its hardships than those of Turkey, while it would enable them to mass all their forces on the side of Adrianople, as a very small number of men would then suffice to defend

⁽¹⁾ [The document is marked "Seen at Berlin." A copy of the despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

the snow-clad passes on the south-western frontier against a possible irruption of the Turks.

Monsieur Sazonow replied that this might be so and that, in any case, he knew that the present Bulgarian plan of campaign was to advance with their concentrated forces on Adrianople and to force a battle outside that town. Were they, however, to gain a decisive victory there and to march on Constantinople, Russia would be obliged to warn them off, as, though she had no desire to establish herself at Constantinople, she could not allow any other Power to take possession of it.

I observed that though the possession of Constantinople might enter into King Ferdinand's ambitious dreams, I did not believe that his subjects aspired to anything beyond the realisation of the Greater Bulgaria of the Treaty of San Stefano;⁽²⁾ and I enquired whether Russia proposed to forestall the Bulgarians at Constantinople should the latter endeavour to bring the war to an end by an advance on the capital. His Excellency replied that Russia would, in that case, present an ultimatum at Sofia and that that would suffice to arrest the further advance of the Bulgarian army.

On my asking what His Excellency thought that Austria and Roumania would do, in the event of war breaking out, Monsieur Sazonow said that they would certainly mobilise and that he feared that, if Servia joined Bulgaria, Austria would occupy Belgrade. He trusted that Roumania would stop at mobilisation and that she would not advance into Bulgaria; but in either case Russia would probably have to mobilise too. I remarked that, if Roumania did attack Bulgaria, I feared that public opinion in this country would force the hands of the Imperial Government and compel them to take action. In that case the war might become general. The only way to localise it seemed to me to be for Austria and Russia to agree not to intervene at all and for both of them to use their influence at Bucharest to prevent any intervention on the part of Roumania. The Powers could at the same time give the Balkan States to understand that, whatever the issue of the war, the settlement of the Eastern question would rest with Europe and not with them.

Yesterday evening Monsieur Sazonow dined at the Embassy and spoke to me again on the situation in the Balkans.

He had, he said, received very serious news since our last conversation. The Bulgarian Minister had that day informed him that if the Powers did not at once take the Macedonian question in hand and induce Turkey to initiate serious reforms in that province, Bulgaria would be compelled to go to war. By serious reforms, General Paprikoff had explained that he meant the application of Article XXIII of the Treaty of Berlin.

Monsieur Sazonow had replied that it was impossible for the Powers to ask for the execution of that article and that, if Bulgaria carried out her threat, she would find that she would not only have to fight Turkey but Austria and Roumania as well. It was ridiculous of her to think that she could drag a great Power like Russia into war at any moment she liked to name. Russia had, indeed, liberated Bulgaria from Turkish rule and had given her her independence; but, if Bulgaria was mad enough to embark on war, in defiance of Russia's express wish, she would do so at her own risk and peril. Russia would in that case consider her historic mission at an end and leave Bulgaria to her fate. What, moreover, His Excellency enquired, would be Bulgaria's position at the end of the war, even supposing it to be victorious? She would not be allowed to retain possession of any portion of Turkish territory, in spite of all her sacrifices of blood and money, and would find herself confronted with a revolution at home.

To this General Paprikoff had replied that Bulgaria must run the risk. Revolution was already at her door and would inevitably break out, were the Government to continue to pursue a policy of apathetic inaction. In support of this contention he had cited the daily attacks made on the King, whose position was rapidly becoming untenable. The General had then proceeded to speak of the intolerable position

(2) [*v. B.F.S.P.*, Vol 69, pp. 732-44.]

of the Bulgarians in Macedonia and had declared that, on the outbreak of war, the Bulgarian Government would solemnly proclaim to the world that the only aim which they had in view was to ameliorate the lot of their kinsmen across the frontier and that they would not seek any territorial aggrandisement.

Monsieur Sazonow remarked to me that such language was but natural in the mouth of a Bulgarian, adding that he was sure that, if I were a Bulgarian, I should have spoken in the same sense. I replied that this was quite possible but that, had I done so, I should not have expected anyone to believe my professions of absolute disinterestedness.

His Excellency then proceeded to say that he had sent for the Turkish Ambassador and had impressed on him the seriousness of the situation, begging him to urge his Government to do something on their own initiative. He had, he said, suggested to Turkhan Pasha the advisability of reforming the administration of Justice and of allowing the Christian element to be represented in the provincial administrative bodies. He had also telegraphed to the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople instructing him to speak in the same sense to the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs. As, moreover, he had reason to believe that Bulgaria would not move unless she was assured of the co-operation of the other Balkan States, he had instructed the Russian Ministers at Belgrade and Cetinje to use all their influence to prevent Serbia and Montenegro joining in an attack on Turkey. His Excellency did not say whether he was making any representations at Athens, but told me that he had heard that Turkey was inclined to keep Greece quiet by the promise of concessions on the Cretan question.

Monsieur Sazonow also informed me that he had addressed a circular telegram to the Russian Ambassadors in London, Paris, Rome, Berlin and Vienna, instructing them to communicate what he had told me to the respective Governments and to invite their co-operation. His Excellency expressed his earnest hope that His Majesty's Representative at Constantinople would be instructed to hold somewhat similar language to that of his Russian colleague. He had, he added, sent for the Austrian Chargé d'Affaires and had begged him to explain to Count Berchtold that, in acting as he was doing, he was not attempting to "braconner sur son terrain" and that his present action was but the natural outcome of the recent Austrian proposal and had been forced upon him by the seriousness of the situation. He was most anxious that no Power should strike out a line of its own, and he thought that Russia and Austria, as the two Powers most directly concerned in the Balkans, should agree to pursue a policy of complete disinterestedness.

I told His Excellency that I was sure that you would be pleased to learn that he had approached the Austrian Government in this spirit, as I knew that you were most anxious that nothing should be done that might divide Europe into two hostile camps on the Balkan question. I cannot, however, help feeling that Monsieur Sazonow has rather cleverly seized this opportunity to oust Austria from the leading rôle in the European concert and to place the conductor's bâton in the hand of Russia.

From what Monsieur Sazonow told me, it is not likely that Bulgaria will take any decisive action for another three or four weeks.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

MINUTE.

It is impossible to know how far the hand of the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t is really being forced by public opinion and how far they wish the Powers to think that this is the case in order to justify an attack on Turkey.

H. N.

Sept[ember] 23, 1912.

R. P. M.

A. N.

E. G.

No. 723.

Mr Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 40050/38672/12/44.

(No. 99.) Confidential.

Sofia, D. September 18, 1912.

Sir,

R. September 24, 1912.

I have the honour to report that the Russian Minister tells me that he communicated to M. Guéchoff on the 14th instant a verbal message he had received from the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople to the effect that the Turkish troops were in perfect readiness, that should Bulgaria attack Turkey the latter would conclude peace with Italy at once, that in order to keep Greece quiet the Turks would be prepared to give her Crete, that the Albanians would take care of the Servians and that consequently Bulgaria would find herself alone. To this His Excellency replied that Bulgaria would not fight alone and hinted that she could rely on the support of Servia, Greece and Montenegro.

From a very reliable source I hear that M. Guéchoff's reply to Russian Minister was couched in a somewhat more forcible language. It appears that he pointed out again to M. Nekludow that it was Russia herself who had been instrumental in bringing about a rapprochement between the Balkan States, and that now apparently she wished to destroy the result of her efforts; but that if Russia made any attempt to detach Greece or Servia from Bulgaria at this moment, it would be the end of the solidarity of the Balkan States, the death-knell of Russia's influence in the Balkans.

I have. &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 724.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 40051/38672/12/44.

(No. 100.) Confidential.

Sofia, D. September 18, 1912.

Sir,

R. September 24, 1912.

In the course of conversation with M. Guéchoff yesterday, I asked His Excellency whether there was any truth in a rumour I had seen reported in the German press, to the effect that Bulgaria was endeavouring to come to an understanding with Roumania as regards the Balkan question.

M. Guéchoff replied that, when the situation in Turkey appeared at its worst, just before the appointment of Ghazi Moukhtar Pasha as Grand Vizier, the Roumanian Minister of Foreign Affairs had one day said to the Bulgarian Chargé d'Affaires that in the case of a cataclysm in Turkey, and of a Bulgarian advance, Bulgaria would find Roumania at her back for the first two or three weeks, and after that, they would have to see what was to be done, a remark which was taken by the Chargé d'Affaires as a hint that an arrangement might be arrived at between the two countries. The Bulgarian Representative had then asked M. Majoresco whether a mobilization on the part of Roumania was meant, as it certainly would not be worth while for so short a period, but M. Majoresco then broke off the conversation by saying that it was better not to talk of war.

To my enquiry as to whether the question had been raised since then M. Guéchoff evaded a direct reply, but said that according to his information he thought that

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

Count Berchtold had given the advice to Roumania to keep quiet, and to await developments in case of a conflict in the Balkans. It was absurd, His Excellency added, that Roumania should think of moving if Bulgaria's intentions were only the securing of Reforms for Macedonia: if her motives were Self aggrandizement, then it would be a different pair of shoes. He also referred to the Emperor of Austria's great age and his aversion to war. This is not the first time that His Excellency had made this remark, and I cannot help thinking that he has some ground for believing that neither Austria nor Roumania will move in the case of war.

M. Guéchoff then turned to the question of Count Berchtold's proposals which he said he had heard could be considered as dead. According to information he had received the German Chancellor had, in the course of his recent visit to Buchlau, advised Count Berchtold not to persevere with them.⁽²⁾

M. Guéchoff also spoke of the discontent in the army which continued to increase in a disquieting fashion. He said he regretted that he could not tell me that the situation was more reassuring; it was not so, the apparent calm was quite superficial.

This appearance of calm to which His Excellency referred is one of the most disquieting features of the situation, clearly indicating that the people are merely according a respite to the Government. It would seem indeed, judging from the comparative silence of the opposition press, as if the Government had actually pledged themselves to act. I hear from two independent sources that King Ferdinand a few days ago, actually received General Savoff the Stamboulovist Minister of War, who now stands impeached for treason, and has always been acknowledged as the most efficient officer in the Bulgarian Army, and the most likely to be Commander in Chief in case of war. His reception by King Ferdinand is very significant.

There is considerable military activity. The time-expired men were not disbanded on the 14th instant as usual. The manœuvres at Shumla have proved a useful cloak for the transport from Sofia of large quantities of arms and ammunition which have been directed under cover of night to Philippopolis. I also hear that the Macedonian deserters from the Turkish Army, who are refugees in Bulgaria, are to be supplied with arms and drilled by officers of the reserve. It is estimated that a corps of some thirty thousand men will be raised in this way.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

MINUTE.

This is a most disquieting despatch.

If Mr. Barclay's view is correct, it is evident that no further "warning" at the Balkan capitals will be of any use.

H. N.

Sept[ember] 24, 1912.

R. P. M.

A. N.

E. G.

(2) [cp. G.P. XXXIII, p. 99.]

No. 725.

Mr. T. Russell to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Vienna, September 20, 1912.

F.O. 39572/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 76.)

D. 1·30 P.M.

R. 2·50 P.M.

Sir F. Bertie's tel[egram] No. 180 (Sept[ember] 18).⁽²⁾

Russian chargé d'affaires submitted similar proposal to Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] yesterday. H[is] E[xc]ellency said he must withhold definite

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 428); to Berlin (as No. 195); to St. Petersburg (as No. 889); to Constantinople (as No. 640); to Rome (as No. 315). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 692-3, No. 721.]

pronouncement till he had had time to study details more thoroughly but showed pretty clearly that this new step on the part of Russia was not very welcome. He advanced no definite objection but in the course of general conversation said that he felt sure neither England nor France would be willing to adopt this new Russian proposal.

No. 726.

Lord Granville to Sir Eduard Grey.⁽¹⁾

Berlin, September 20, 1912.

D. 7.5 P.M.

R. 9 P.M.

F.O. 39587/33672/12/44.

Tel (No. 115.)

Balkans.

My telegram No. 114 (Sept[ember] 17).⁽²⁾

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs informs me that Russian chargé d'affaires made formal proposal to him yesterday for representations by Powers at Constantinople, urging grant of concessions indicated in article 23 of Berlin Treaty. His Excellency replied that he must consult Imperial Chancellor and Germany's ally before giving official answer, but that speaking personally and unofficially he was opposed to proposal. Turkey had just informed Germany officially that she proposed to extend reforms granted to Albania to all European vilayets, and he considered it impossible to approach Turkey immediately with fresh demands. Secretary of State added to me that even if Powers made proposed representations, and Turkey agreed, it would take at least a year to decide upon exact meaning of article 23, whereas something immediate was required; besides, grant of such concessions would probably only whet the appetite of Balkan States. He repeated his earnest desire for an agreement between the Powers for localising any eventual trouble, and thought that existence of such an agreement, of which Balkan States could easily be allowed to hear, would have an excellent effect.

"Times" correspondent here has just returned from Constantinople and Sophia, and was informed by Bulgarian Minister for Foreign Affairs that Bulgaria would take the field in six weeks, to which he replied that, when two gentlemen announce their intention to fight a duel six weeks hence, people were not much impressed. I told Secretary of State this story, and he highly approved and agreed (? with the) answer. He thinks that Russian pessimism is due to language of Bulgarian representative at St. Petersburg, and not to news from Bulgaria, and he believes that Bulgarian representative used this sort of language partly in hopes of being given something or other to keep them quiet and partly to show their own people how warlike they are and that they are only forced to keep the peace by the Powers. His own news from military attaché in Bulgaria was excellent, particularly as to perfect quiet and discipline in army.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 430), to St. Petersburg (as No. 891); to Vienna (as No. 192); to Rome (as No. 317); to Constantinople (as No. 640); to Sofia (as No. 65). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 690, No. 717]

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 39627/29361/12/44.
Tel. (No. 384.)

Paris, D. September 20, 1912, 10.35 P.M.
R. September 21, 1912, 8 A.M.

Petersburg telegram No. 839. (Sept[ember] 17.)⁽²⁾

Russian Amb[assado]r told me yesterday that he had received similar information from Petersburg but had not yet been instructed to take action. He went on to descant on weakness of present Turkish Cabinet and especially of Grand Vizier. If Turkey was to surmount her present difficulties a stronger hand was necessary and he could see no suitable statesman except Kiamil Pasha or possibly Ferid Pasha. He finally suggested with considerable insistence that I should try to bring about accession of former to office. I said that perhaps force of events would bring this about. If Kiamil were to take office at our suggestion he would expect support from us of a kind that we could not give, and I thought that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] would not be prepared to take a step involving so much responsibility when we could only give moral support. Kiamil's term of office also might very well be short and on his fall we might find ourselves identified with opponents of the new Gov[ernment].

Russian Amb[assado]r pressed his suggestion with so much insistence that I think it possible that he may be urging Mr. Sazonov to submit it to you.

That such a proposal should come from the Russian Embassy which for the last four years has had such intimate relations with forward section of Committee is curious but perhaps may be explained by change of Ambassador and by serious aspect of affairs and by his desire to tide over the crisis. I quite share view of Russian Amb[assado]r for owing to its partly Committee character it has followed so undecided a policy that it has been losing ground in public opinion which expected more vigorous action. The Committee forces in the country and in the army have been gaining ground proportionately. The advent of Kiamil in the way suggested by Russian Amb[assado]r which would involve a new departure for this Embassy would at the present moment be difficult to bring about (see my despatch No. 744)⁽³⁾ and even if the Russians undertook to give him moral support, chances of his being able to weather a crisis in Balkan affairs, which would probably have a violent repercussion on Turkish internal affairs, are more than doubtful while his failure would at the present moment be difficult to bring about (see my despatch No. 744)⁽³⁾

Complexion of Cabinet may change in November after the elections.

MINUTES.⁽⁴⁾

Mr. Marling's remarks appear sound.

It would be against our interests to use up Kiamil Pasha now for if this happened whom could we find in his place? The present Gov[ernment] had better be left to bear the brunt of the present situation and Kiamil Pasha be kept in reserve.

Perhaps the Secretary of State will speak to M. Sazonov

H. N.

Sept[ember] 21, 1912.

R. P. M.

Mr. Marling's observations are very sound, but unless M. Sazonov alludes to the matter I sh[ould] think it better for us to say nothing to him.

A. N.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 429); to Berlin (as No. 196); to Vienna (as No. 191); to St. Petersburg (as No. 890); to Rome (as No. 316). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 690-1, No. 718.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 673-4, No. 696.]

⁽⁴⁾ [Following upon these minutes there is a draft in Sir Edward Grey's hand of the telegram sent in reply. v. *infra*, p. 701, No. 730.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 39497/33672/12/44.

(No. 462.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 20, 1912.

The French Amb[assado]r remarked to Sir A. Nicolson on the 17th inst[ant] that in certain quarters much alarm existed as to the Balkan situation, but that he did not share these apprehensions. The proposals of the Austro-Hungarian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs], badly drawn up and futile as they were, had no doubt been one cause of the agitation, but he considered that their chief object was to reply to the recent Bulgaro-Servian alliance engineered under the ægis of Russia. The French Amb[assado]r at Vienna had reported that he had ascertained that C[oun]t Berchtold, before communicating his proposals to the Powers, had acquainted King Ferdinand with them, which indicated that the latter had divulged at Vienna the fact of the Bulgaro-Servian understanding. The Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] had told the French C[hargé] d'Aff[aire]s at St. Petersburg of the language which he had held at Sofia warning Bulgaria not to disturb the peace, and had intimated that if Bulgaria disregarded this advice and made a dash towards Constantinople Russia would prevent her from going further than Adrianople.

Sir A. Nicolson asked M. Cambon whether it was not possible in these circumstances that Bulgaria and Servia, having been encouraged by Russia to make an alliance, might not consider that they had been left in the lurch by Russia when they had hoped that the moment had at length arrived to profit by an alliance formed under the ægis of Russia.

M. Cambon said that probably this was what would occur, and that the 2 Balkan States would consider they had been duped. He added that the policy of M. Sazonow was childish and inconsequent and in reality he was mainly responsible for all the agitation.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations]

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

Constantinople, September 21, 1912.

F.O. 39713/33672/12/44.

D. 1.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 389.)

R. 2 P.M.

My telegram No. 384 (Sept[ember] 20).⁽²⁾

Russian Ambassador will make representations to Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 699, No. 727.]

No. 730.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr Marling.

F.O. 39627/29361/12/44.

Tel. (No. 646.)

*Foreign Office, September 21, 1912. 7 p.m.*Your telegram No. 384.⁽¹⁾

We cannot take responsibility that active interference advocated by Russian Ambassador would entail upon us and I approve what you have said. If Russian Ambassador presses the subject again you can say that if discussed at all it should presumably be between Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] and myself.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [r. *supra*, p. 699, No. 727.]

⁽²⁾ [For M. Sazonov's visit to England and his conversations with Sir Edward Grey, r. *infra*, pp. 749-72, chapter LXXVIII.]

No. 731.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Paget and to Count de Sulis.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 39449/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 16) and (No. 65.)

Foreign Office, September 21, 1912, 7 p.m.

You should inform M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that we have most strongly urged restraint at Sophia and that we earnestly support the advice to maintain peace that has already been given by other Powers to the Balkan States.

To Cettinje only.

We are much surprised to hear that Montenegrin officers and men are taking an active part in Albania and we strongly deprecate this and any action that may lead to war with Turkey.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 732.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 39778/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 37.)

*Sofia, D. September 22, 1912.**R. September 23, 1912, 10 a.m.*

Russian Minister two days ago again emphatically declared to Bulgarian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that, should Bulgaria and Serbia make use of their entente to attack Turkey Russia felt it her duty to warn them with unsparing outspokenness that in such an eventuality she would be guided by her own interests.

Warning simultaneously given in Belgrade also advising Serbia not to follow Bulgaria in case of war has so far met with no response as the Servian Minister here yesterday merely communicated to M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] text of Russian declaration without any comments from his Gov[ernment].

It appears that Bulgaria and Serbia are disgusted with Russia's attempt to separate Balkan States after bringing them together. From what I gather their solidarity seems invulnerable at present.

Sent to Constantinople and Belgrade.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 441); to St. Petersburg (as No. 901). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 733.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 39782/33672/12/44.

Sofia, D. September 22, 1912.

Tel. (No. 38.)

R. September 23, 1912.

Russian Minister has to-day telegraphed at length to Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs in London stating he has good reason to believe that four Balkan States are meditating some decisive step shortly, namely, a demand which they will simultaneously present to the Porte for grant of reforms to Macedonia under guarantee of the Powers, accompanied by a declaration that they will respect territorial *status quo*.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Constantinople (as No. 647); to St Petersburg (as No. 897); to Paris (as No. 435); to Vienna (as No. 193); to Rome (as No. 319), to Berlin (as No. 198); to Athens (as No. 165); to Belgrade (as No. 17), to Cettigné (as No. 66). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 734.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 39874/33672/12/44.

Paris, D. September 22, 1912.

(No. 406.)

R. September 23, 1912.

Sir,

I have received a letter from Monsieur Paléologue, Political Director at the Quay d'Orsay, informing me that Monsieur Poincaré has had conversations with the Russian and Turkish Ambassadors in Paris which have caused him to view the situation in the Balkans with disquietude. His Excellency, so Monsieur Paléologue states, has telegraphed to the French Ambassador in London to communicate to you and to Monsieur Sazonow a draft agreement copy of which is herein enclosed and which Monsieur Paléologue has forwarded to me "à titre personnel."

I have, &c.

(For the Ambassador),

L[ANCELOT] D. CARNEGIE.

Enclosure in No. 734.

Projet d'Accord.⁽²⁾

Le Gouvernement de la République française, le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique et le Gouvernement Impérial russe, également soucieux de sauvegarder la paix et de maintenir le *statu quo* dans la Péninsule balkanique, estime d'un commun accord qu'une action collective des Grandes Puissances peut seule conjurer les graves événements qui menacent la tranquillité et l'équilibre de l'Orient européen.

En conséquence, les dits Gouvernements conviennent de soumettre à l'agrément du Gouvernement impérial allemand et du Gouvernement impérial et royal austro-hongrois les dispositions ci-après :—

1° Les Puissances interviendront simultanément et dans le plus bref délai, auprès des Cabinets de Sophia, de Belgrade, d'Athènes et de Cettigné, pour leur conseiller

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch, with enclosure, was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [This draft agreement was also communicated to Sir A. Nicolson by M. Paul Cambon on September 23. (F O. 40717/33672/12/44.)]

de rien entreprendre qui puisse troubler la paix ou affecter le *statu quo* de la Péninsule balkanique.

2° Si ces conseils ne sont pas entendus, les Puissances combineront aussitôt leurs efforts pour localiser le conflit et y mettre fin. Elles déclareront notamment aux États perturbateurs qu'ils n'auraient à espérer, d'une victoire éventuelle, aucun profit territorial.

3° Si la suite des événements nécessitait l'emploi de moyens plus énergiques, tels qu'une démonstration militaire ou navale, les Puissances n'y recourraient qu'après s'être concertées.

4° En même temps qu'elles s'acquitteront de la démarche spécifiée au § 1^{er} les Puissances interviendront auprès de la Sublime Porte pour lui conseiller d'exécuter, sans retard, les réformes administratives que réclament légitimement les populations chrétiennes de la Péninsule balkanique.

MINUTE.

The Secretary of State will no doubt discuss this with the French Ambassador

It is doubtful whether (1) would prove effective, for all the Balkan States know the views of the Powers already and the Governmen[t] of Bulgaria (where the point of danger lies) will, we know, conform to them as long as her hand is not forced by public opinion.

It is not clear how effect is to be given to (2) and it would be rash to declare at the start that none of the Balkan States should benefit territorially, since events might force the Powers to abandon this position.

If (3) were carried out Russia or Austria-Hungary (or both) would have to be charged by the Powers to do it and neither would view with pleasure the active intervention of the other.

(4) would probably make matters worse by upsetting a well-meaning Turkish Governmen[t] and bringing back the Committee on a wave of chauvinism. Plenty has been said to the Turks already and their replies have been satisfactory.

H. N.

Sept[ember] 23, 1912.

R. P. M.

A. N.

E. G.

No. 735.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.(¹)

F.O. 40034/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 648.) R.

Foreign Office, September 23, 1912, 12 noon.

I informed Turkish Ambass[ado]r on Sept[ember] 21(²) of the disquieting news which we had received from Bulgaria and the difficulty which the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t asserted they experienced in keeping the agitation in check. I told the Ambassador that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t as well as other Powers especially Russia had given the most serious warnings at Sofia and had impressed on the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t that the Powers were desirous that the peace should not be disturbed and that any action on the part of Bulgaria of an actively hostile character would meet with severe displeasure. Similar warnings had been given at Belgrade and Cetinje. At the same time the Ambass[ado]r was informed that in order to strengthen these representations it was most desirable that the Powers should be able to show that Turkey did intend to introduce liberal reforms into Macedonia and elsewhere: and that it would be a great step in advance if a thoroughly good admin[istration] were established and if those who had been guilty of the outrages at

(¹) [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 436); to St. Petersburg (No. 898); to Berlin (No. 199); to Vienna (No. 194); omitting last paragraph. A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

(²) [*cp. infra*, pp. 712-3, No. 744.]

Kochana were punished. The hands of the Powers would be strengthened in any further representations at the Balkan capitals if the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t were to publish even an outline of the reforms which they intended to introduce and if the Powers were assured that it was the firm intention of the Porte to establish a stable and good administration. The Ambassador was given very clearly to understand that the remarks which I had made were conceived in a perfectly amicable spirit and with the object of communicating to him the substance of the information which had reached us as to the state of affairs in Bulgaria and other Balkan States and of making friendly suggestions as to the course which the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t might perhaps be disposed to take in order to meet the immediate exigencies of the situation. I told H[is] E[xcellency] that I was opposed to making any formal representations at Constantinople as I thought that such steps would embarrass the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t and that my sole desire was to assist them in carrying out the good intentions with which I knew they were animated. (End of R.)

(To Mr. Marling alone.) You should take an opportunity of informing unofficially and in a most friendly manner the M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] as to what passed between the Turkish Amb[assado]r and myself.

No. 736.

Sir R. Paget to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Belgrade, September 23, 1912.

F.O. 40080/83672/12/44.

D. 9.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 11.)

R. 11 P.M.

I spoke to Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day⁽²⁾ as instructed in your telegram No. 16 (Sept[ember] 21).⁽³⁾

He replied as before that Servian Government are using their best efforts to encourage Bulgarian Government to resist popular pressure for war, but that situation is serious, and he fears that their efforts may not be successful unless the Powers in addition give advice to hold out some definite hope of substantial reforms in Macedonia.

Russian Minister tells me that two days ago he presented a memorandum stating that if Balkan States commenced war Russia would leave them to their fate, and urging Servian Government to inform Bulgarian Government that they would dissociate themselves from aggressive action. Minister for Foreign Affairs said he would lay the memorandum before the King and the Council of Ministers, but gave Russian Minister to understand that he thought it unlikely that the advice could be followed.

Unfortunately the idea prevails both in Serbia and Bulgaria that, notwithstanding Russia's official declarations, public opinion in Russia will not permit Balkan States to be abandoned, and Minister for Foreign Affairs tells me that this idea is ineradicable.

I pointed out that there is no real agitation or excitement in Serbia, and that Servian Government should not allow themselves to be merely taken in tow by Bulgaria and dragged into an adventure. Minister for Foreign Affairs admitted that as yet agitation was slight, but said that if Bulgaria attacked it would be impossible for Serbia to hang back.

(Sent to Constantinople and Sophia.)

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 442); to Berlin (as No. 202); to Vienna (as No. 195), to St. Petersburg (as No. 908); to Rome (as No. 322); to Cetinje (as No. 67). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. infra*, pp. 710-2, No. 743.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 701, No. 731.]

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 40880/38672/12/44.

(No. 101.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sofia, D. September 28, 1912.

R. September 30, 1912.

I have the honour to report that the Russian Minister told me yesterday⁽²⁾ that he had two days previously under instructions from his Government read out to M. Guéchoff a declaration to the effect that Russia had at one time shown much sympathy towards the Serbo-Bulgarian entente, and had hailed with delight the cessation of internecine struggles between them. From the very outset she had never ceased to look upon this entente in any other light than an act for mutual defence and the recognition of mutual interests. Should now, however Bulgaria and Servia without taking heed of Russia's incessant warnings, resolve to make use of their entente to attack Turkey together, an act which would expose their integrity and their independence to a dire trial, Russia felt it her duty to warn them with unsparing outspokenness (*"avec une franchise impitoyable"*) that in such an eventuality she would have to be guided solely by her own and direct interests.

Monsieur Nekludow said that Monsieur Guéchoff had appeared much concerned at this declaration, and had again harped upon the impossible situation in Bulgaria, out of which a way must be found.

The Servian Minister, whom I also saw yesterday, referred to the above Russian Declaration, and said that M. Guéchoff had told him that he had listened to M. Nekludow quite unmoved, and had replied that his declaration in no way alarmed him, as Bulgaria and Servia considered their interests to be identical with those of Russia.

M. Spalaikovitch then alluded to a declaration simultaneously made at Belgrade by the Russian Minister, counselling Servia to declare to Bulgaria that she could not follow her in a war which would be especially fatal to her (Servia). M. Pashitch had sent him a copy of the text which he had communicated to M. Guéchoff, but he had not been charged to make any statement in the sense desired by Russia.

Continuing the conversation, M. Spalaikovitch said that the whole time Russia and the other Powers spoke of war as if the Balkan States wanted to plunge into war. Nothing was further from their wishes. What they wanted was to secure reforms for Macedonia. It was no use counting any longer upon the promises of Turkey. The Balkan States would not rest now until reforms were granted to Macedonia under the guarantee of the Powers. Russia, after all her endeavours to join the Balkan States together, was now trying to separate them; but Servia would remain faithful to her ally. If she did not do so now, her ultimate fate was sealed; she would be eaten up by Austria and Bulgaria. Even an occupation of Belgrade, or some northern points of Servia could be but temporary; the Powers and especially Russia certainly could not allow it to be permanent. If they did, it would be the end of Russian prestige in the Balkans, the triumph of Austro-German policy. There was no other way out of the difficulty for Servia, than to stick through thick and thin to Bulgaria. And now was the time or never for Bulgaria to put forward her claims. The internal situation of the country compelled her to do something, and Servia would back her up. The military preparations on all sides were not being taken with the special object of declaring war upon Turkey, but with the object of backing up their demands. There need be no war if Turkey gave the reforms they asked for.

I gave counsels of moderation to M. Spalaikovitch and urged that the present Turkish Government should be given a fair chance, since they had already shown their willingness to give reforms. I also pointed out to him that perhaps they were

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to Belgrade.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 701, No. 782.]

counting too much upon an Austrian occupation of Belgrade being only a temporary measure, and that the Powers might not be prepared to hazard a European war on that account. He replied that all risks had been carefully weighed.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

MINUTE.

Of the main points in this desp[atch] we had already been apprised by tel[egram].⁽³⁾

It has of course been impossible for Russia to make the Balkan States believe that in all eventualities she w[oul]d leave them to their fate, and, as a matter of fact, the Balkan States are quite right in not believing this.

R. G. V.
Oct[ober] 1
A. N.
E. G.

(³) [*supra*, pp. 701-2, Nos 732-3]

No. 738.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Paris, September 24, 1912.

F.O. 40189/33672/12/44.

D. 4.47.

Tel. (No. 136.)

R. 7.45.

Political director told Mr. Carnegie confidentially to-day that Bulgarian Minister, who has just returned from Sophia, informed him yesterday that the agreement between Bulgaria, Servia, Greece, and Montenegro is now complete, and that they are ready to move against Turkey, which they will do on its becoming apparent that the Powers are unable to compel Turkey to introduce necessary reforms in Macedonia. The four States do not aim at territorial expansion, but demand that reforms should be guaranteed by the Powers, and that the Ministers of the four States at Constantinople should be entrusted with the task of seeing that they are properly executed. The four States do not intend to declare war suddenly, but propose to produce a diplomatic position from which only issue would be war.

Political director pointed out to Bulgarian Minister extravagant nature of demand which Turkey could not grant, and expressed his doubt that the four States would act together, for a small concession from Turkey to Greece respecting Crete would detach her from her allies. Servia, moreover, would have to reckon with Austria, and there were many ways in which the Powers could put pressure on all four States. Bulgarian Minister admitted that co-operation of Greece was doubtful, and said that in no case would Bulgaria move alone.

(¹) [This telegram was sent to Berlin (as No. 205); to Vienna (as No. 198); to St. Petersburg (as No. 907); to Constantinople (as No. 654); to Belgrade (as No. 19); to Sofia (as No. 68); to Athens (as No. 187), to Cettinje (as No. 68). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 739.

Mr. T. Russell to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Vienna, September 24, 1912.

F.O. 40192/33672/12/44.

D. 6.50.

Tel. (No. 80.)

R. 8.15.

Delegations.

Principal points in Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs' statement⁽²⁾ just delivered are:—

1. No change in relations with other Powers.
2. Peace between Italy and Turkey would mitigate Balkan troubles.
3. Object of his recent proposal was to bring Powers into line in order that they should advise Porte to carry on work of reform.
4. Situation still precarious, and statesmen of Balkan States are faced with task of great difficulty.
5. Hopes that Turkey will realise how serious situation is.
6. Denies that Austria-Hungary is identified with Committee of Union and Progress.
7. Austria-Hungary will give her moral support to grant of legitimate claims of inhabitants of Roumelia.
8. Austria-Hungary is fortified in her Balkan policy by knowledge that it is analogous to that of Germany as proved by recent conversations with Imperial Chancellor.

The last paragraph of the speech assumes a somewhat pessimistic tone, and concludes by saying that only if Austria-Hungary is well equipped on land and sea can she look to the future with confidence.

Translation by post.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [A summary of this statement was given in the *Times* on September 25, 1912.]

No. 740.

Sir R. Paget to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 40200/33672/12/44.

Belgrade, 10. September 24, 1912.

Tel. (No. 12.)

R. September 25, 1912, 10.20.

Turkish Government have stopped 20 truckloads of ammunition destined for Servia at Uscub.

Turkish Minister tells me that the reason he has given to the Servian Government is that their attitude appears to be no longer friendly. He represented to M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that they took no measures to contradict false report about massacre, that there is open talk about war against Turkey in the country, and that the existence of an alliance or at any rate an understanding between Bulgaria and Servia becomes increasingly certain. That since Bulgaria has assumed a hostile attitude towards Turkey he must ask before ammunition is passed that Servia should explain what is her position and give an assurance that in the event of war she would remain neutral.

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] gave an evasive answer somewhat to the effect that Servia would have to be guided by events. He complained that Turkish

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

Government were not acting fairly since it had been the practice for the Governments to reciprocally pass through ammunition for one another. Turkish Minister replied that this practice held good when relations were cordial but Turkish Government could not be expected to pass ammunition possibly for use against themselves. Sent to Constantinople.

MINUTE.

One can hardly blame the Turks ? Unnecessary to repeat.

H. N.
Sept[ember] 25, 1912.
R. P. M.
A. N.
E. G.

No. 741.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 40206/38672/12/44.

(No. 413.)

Paris, D. September 24, 1912.

Sir,

R. September 25, 1912.

The Political Director of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the course of conversation to-day with Mr. Carnegie referred to the proposed agreement between England, France and Russia in regard to the Balkans, draft of which I had the honour to transmit to you in my despatch No. 406 of the 22nd instant.⁽²⁾ Monsieur Paléologue said that there were two objections which you would probably raise to the proposal in its present form. Firstly, it would mark the division of the Powers into two groups, a step which you had always deprecated in dealing with questions concerning the Balkans, and secondly, you had expressed the opinion that more harm than good would be done by the Powers making further representations at present at Constantinople as is suggested in paragraph 4 of the draft agreement. Monsieur Paléologue said that in order to remove the first objection Monsieur Cambon had been instructed to inform you and Monsieur Sazonow that as soon as an agreement on the subject had been come to by the three Governments Monsieur Poincaré was ready to communicate it, as coming from himself, to all the Powers simultaneously. No mention need be made of the fact that England and Russia had already accepted it. In regard to paragraph 4 M. Paléologue observed that it had been inserted solely with the idea of making M. Poincaré's proposal more palatable to Monsieur Sazonow.

I have, &c.

(For the Ambassador),

L[ANCELOT] D. CARNEGIE.

MINUTES.

The first objection mentioned by M. Paléologue certainly exists from our point of view, and might perhaps be met as suggested though it is unlikely that the secret would be kept.

As for the second, M. Sazonow has not so far expressed satisfaction with point 4 which we dislike and has refused to consider point 3 as to which we share his view.

H. N.
Sept[ember] 26, 1912.
R. P. M.
A. N.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 702-3, No. 734, and *note* (2). This despatch was received on the 23rd, on which day M. Paul Cambon also communicated the text to Sir A. Nicolson.]

M. Sazonow and I agreed to reply that we would if France agreed submit 1 and 2 to Berlin and Vienna.

E. G.

I do not recollect M. Cambon saying M. Poincaré w[oul]d submit it to all the Powers as coming from himself and without previous consultation with us and Russia. He simply handed me the Memo[randum].

A. N.

No. 742.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Eduard Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 40831/33672/12/44.

(No. 102.)

Sir,

Sofia, D. September 24, 1912.

R. September 30, 1912.

I have endeavoured in my despatches for some time past to depict to the best of my ability the changes which have come over the situation here, and of which the Kotchana Massacre has been the starting point, if not an opportune pretext. Taking various circumstances into consideration, such as the difficult, almost dangerous, position of King Ferdinand; the untenable posture of the Guéchoff Government, unless they do something for their kinsmen in Macedonia; the understanding existing between Bulgaria, Servia, Greece and Montenegro; the belief of these States that, owing to Italy having her hands full, the balance in Europe will never be so favourably inclined to the side of Russia, their protector—they argue that in a few years Austria's army will be doubled, the Emperor Francis Joseph may no longer be on the throne and Italy will have recovered from the effects of her war—Bulgaria feels that the time for action has now arrived.

As far as I can judge, I am convinced that they are not bluffing this time, and by putting facts together, such as the active military preparations and orders for stores to be delivered by October 14; King Ferdinand's reception of the impeached Stamboulovist Minister General Savoff, the probable commander-in-chief in case of war; the sudden and unexpected want of interest in the conclusion of the French Loan; the incessant interchange of views between M. Guéchoff and the Servian Minister and the Greek Minister; M. Guéchoff's repeated declarations that something must be done; the apparent confidence with which he has expressed the unlikelihood of Austria or Roumania moving "if Bulgaria's intentions were only the securing of Reforms for Macedonia"; and above all the truce existing between the Government and the Opposition and even the Macedonian agitators here,—I have come to the conclusion that the Bulgarian Government are meditating some decisive step shortly.

In my opinion this step, which they will not undertake alone, but only in conjunction with Servia, Greece and Montenegro, may be in the form of a demand which they will present simultaneously to the Porte for the grant of extensive reforms to Macedonia under the guarantee of the Powers, and probably accompanied by a declaration to the Powers that they will respect the territorial *status quo*. As no territorial aggrandisement is contemplated the four Balkan States feel convinced that neither Russia nor Austria will move, nor that any Power can object, since their step will be merely a request for the Powers to honour the signatures affixed by them to the Treaty of Berlin.

I was confirmed in my opinion on the 22nd instant by the Russian Minister, who told me that he had that very day telegraphed to M. Sazonow in London that he had good reason to believe that such a step was contemplated by the Balkan States. He does not think that their demands will be delivered in the form of an ultimatum. No

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to Belgrade.]

doubt however the extensive military preparations are intended to give more weight to these demands, and should they not be accepted favourably by the Porte, possibly to enforce them.

The reasons of the delay in taking the step contemplated by the Balkan States are not clear. Naturally it takes time to bring four parties into line; moreover their military preparations are not yet completed. But above all, I think that they are awaiting the result of the "Balmoral Interview."⁽²⁾

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

MINUTE.

Mr. Barclay has all along considered war as the most likely solution of the present situation.

If the Balkan States adopted the course foreshadowed on p 3 of this despatch⁽²⁾ it is just possible that, if the Porte w[ould] accept advice in the framing of its reply, war, or anyhow the pretext for it, c[ould] be staved off. It might even be desirable that the Balkan States sh[ould] do something of this sort, as it w[ould] afford the Powers perhaps an opportunity of getting in between the two camps. At present the Balkan States are shaking their fists somewhat inarticulately at Turkey's nose, and it will only be a question of time before one party hits the other

R. G. V.
Oct[ober] 1.
R. P. M.
A. N.
E. G.

⁽²⁾ [*v infra*, pp 749-72, Chapter LXXVIII.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*i c*, paragraphs 3-4]

No. 743.

Sir R Paget to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 40847/33672/12/44.

(No. 57.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. September 24, 1912.

R. September 30, 1912.

I called upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 19th instant and again yesterday when I spoke as instructed in your telegram No. 16 of the 21st instant.⁽²⁾

The views expressed to me on these occasions by Monsieur Pashitch do not differ materially from those which I have reported from time to time as held by Monsieur Yovanovitch the former Minister for Foreign Affairs, but Monsieur Pashitch apart from his present offices of Minister President and Minister for Foreign Affairs, is certainly the most prominent political figure in Serbia and his opinions therefore carry greater weight.

Monsieur Pashitch considers that for the present phase of unrest in the Balkans Austria is directly responsible. Count Berchtold's "decentralization" proposal it is feared may develop into a large Autonomous Albania and Servians, Bulgarians, Greeks and Montenegrins all see their national aspirations in jeopardy and feel that they must either strike now or renounce these entirely. In support of the contention that Austrian aims in Turkey are not straightforward Monsieur Pashitch points to such facts as that when at the outset the Porte had decided to take drastic military measures against the Albanians which would quickly have subdued the insurrection Austria had counselled leniency, milder methods and concessions well knowing these to be useless; also that at the present moment Austria is exciting the Malissoris.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations]

⁽²⁾ [*v supra*, p. 701, No. 731, and *cp. supra*, p. 704, No. 736.]

Monsieur Pashitch looks upon the present situation in Bulgaria as extremely serious but says it may yet be saved unless some fresh incident such as the Kotechana massacre occurs and if the Powers will only show in time that they mean seriously to take the question of reforms in Macedonia in hand. Upon this latter point Monsieur Pashitch specially insisted on both occasions when I saw him. He said the conditions in Macedonia were intolerable for the Christians and the Balkan States must be given some hope of a betterment of the lot of their co-nationals in Turkey. Mere advice to keep quiet would no longer be of avail. This notwithstanding, the Servian Government were exerting what influence they possessed at Sofia to encourage the Bulgarian Government to stem the popular clamour for war and he had instructed the Servian Minister to represent that Serbia has the serious menace of Austria at her back to consider and cannot therefore enter upon a war lightheartedly. I pointed out to Monsieur Pashitch that if Austria is a danger to Serbia Roumania appears no less an uncertain factor in the case of Bulgaria. To this, however, Monsieur Pashitch would not agree. He said Roumania would not interfere until questions of territory were involved. As a matter of fact he did not think Austria would move against Serbia under any circumstances, the danger of a European war would be too great. But even so the Servian Government did not want war; the country required peace for development, their armaments were not quite completed, they would be scarcely quite ready for two years and the possible risk of Austria always remained. He could therefore assure me that Serbia would not move unless Bulgaria commenced hostilities.

I made the observation that in addition to the risk from Austria it would be well also to take into account the fact that the Turkish army is by no means weak and things might not go as smoothly as public opinion in Bulgaria and Serbia seems to expect; furthermore that the Balkan States have been now repeatedly warned by Russia that if they find themselves in difficulties she will not come to their aid and that if they are successful against Turkey they will not be permitted to profit by their victory territorially. With such risks as these I could not see how war could be contemplated. I added that from what the Russian Minister had told me and what I had heard from others it appeared that the Russian official declarations were not believed either in Serbia or Bulgaria and the idea prevailed that Russian public opinion would not permit the Balkan States to be abandoned to their fate. It seemed to me this was a decidedly dangerous view to take and one which the Government should do everything in their power to combat. Monsieur Pashitch replied that it was quite true the conviction that Russia would not ultimately desert them existed in the minds of all Servians and Bulgarians and he thought this conviction for the present ineradicable. "If," he said, "some means were found to destroy this faith in Russia we should look for other friends." Since this could only refer to Austria I suggested that Servians would probably find this rather cold comfort, to which Monsieur Pashitch remarked that Serbia certainly would be in an unenviable position but Austria would only be too glad to come to an arrangement with Bulgaria.

Before seeing Monsieur Pashitch yesterday, the Russian Minister, Monsieur de Hartwig, had told me he recently presented a Memorandum to the Servian Government in which, amongst other things, he urged them to dissociate themselves from any hostile action Bulgaria might take against Turkey. I therefore asked Monsieur Pashitch whether it was necessary Serbia should follow Bulgaria blindly into war. I dwelt upon the fact that there is no real agitation or excitement in Serbia and that it seemed scarcely a commendable policy for Serbia to be taken into tow by Bulgaria and to be dragged into an adventure. His Excellency admitted that at present there was practically no agitation in Serbia but he reverted to the old argument that Serbia, on account of her claims in Macedonia and other reasons cannot afford to let Bulgaria move without moving also. He maintained that any Servian Government which did otherwise would have to face a revolution.

Monsieur de Hartwig who, from his close relations with Monsieur Pashitch,

should be able to form a more or less correct opinion is not very hopeful of the prospect at present. He is much hampered by the fact, to which I have alluded above, that the Russian warnings are not believed specially amongst the Military party. Also, having been one of the chief promoters of the Serbo-Bulgarian entente, he finds his present position of trying to keep the two countries apart a somewhat false one. But at the same time he thinks that the Servian Government are honestly working in Bulgaria to prevent war. He has represented that with the troops Servia and Bulgaria can put in the field respectively about 160,000 and 220,000 men they cannot hope to defeat the Turkish Army. The Montenegrins (about 30,000) are only formidable in their own fastnesses and the Greeks (about 90,000) would not be likely to cause Turkey much difficulty. This argument he thinks has made some impression.

Both Monsieur Pashitch and General Putnik the Minister of War are willing to admit that there is much risk but cannot be moved from the position that if Bulgaria attacks Turkey Servia must join.

Monsieur de Hartwig is telegraphing to his Government to ask whether they cannot hold out some hope to the Servian Government that the Powers will insist on material reforms in Macedonia.

Meanwhile the unrest is causing dislocation and detriment in matters of finance and commerce and, in order to allay nervousness the Government have considered it necessary to contradict the report that the Skupshtina is to be convoked in special session and to publish a communiqué in the official organ stating that the rumours about the imminence of war are untrue.

I have, &c.

RALPH PAGET.

MINUTE.

Servia has been dragged as far as she has gone by Bulgaria and that very unwillingly.

See passages marked. Suspicion of Austrian duplicity have been general all through the Balkans and at Constantinople.

It is more than ever evident how much Russia in general and M. de Hartwig in particular have got themselves into embarrassment by promoting the Serbo-Bulgarian agreement purely with a jealous eye on Austria and forgetting that it must inevitably turn first against Turkey.

R. G. V.
Oct[ober] 1.
R. P. M.
A. N.
E. G.

No. 744.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 40084/33672/12/44.

(No. 463.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 25, 1912.

The Turkish Ambassador called at this Office by appointment on the 21st inst[ant].⁽²⁾

His Highness was told of the information which had reached H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] from Sofia as to the great agitation prevailing in Bulgaria and the difficulty which the Bulgarian Government experienced in restraining the people from resorting to extreme measures. The Bulgarian Government had impressed upon the Powers that they much feared that unless some reforms were introduced into Macedonia without loss of time, public excitement would force the hands of the Government, even so far as to involve a breach of the peace.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 703-4, No. 735.]

Tewfik Pasha was also informed that His Majesty's Government, as well as that of Russia and other Powers, had spoken as seriously as was possible at Sofia in the sense of warning the Bulgarian Government of the desire of the Great Powers that peace should not be disturbed and that the Balkan States should not embark upon any hostile adventures. His Majesty's Government and particularly that of Russia had been exceedingly emphatic in impressing upon the Bulgarian Government that any action on their part of an actively hostile character would meet with severe displeasure. At the same time H[is] H[ighness] was told that in order to strengthen the representations which had been made at Sofia, it was most desirable that the Powers should be able to show that Turkey did intend to introduce liberal reforms into Macedonia and elsewhere.

The Ambassador replied that he was well aware of the feeling which existed in Bulgaria and that his Government were engaged in drawing up a programme of reforms based largely upon the results of the enquiries which had recently been made by the commission which had visited Albania and parts of Macedonia. It was, however, very difficult for a Government to apply reforms to a country in whose districts a state of anarchy and disorder prevailed and in which bomb outrages and assassinations were continually, if not daily, taking place.

The Turkish Government, he said, did not approve of the proposals of Count Berchtold which appeared to foreshadow some kind of autonomy or decentralisation. On the last occasion on which the populations of European Turkey had imagined that some form of autonomy was about to be granted to them the results had been most unsatisfactory and had given rise to internecine warfare between the various nationalities.

I told the Ambassador that it would doubtless be a good step in advance if a thoroughly good administration were established, and if those who had been guilty of the outrages which had occurred at Koehana were punished. It would produce a good effect and would certainly strengthen the hands of the Powers in any further representations made in the Balkan capitals if the Turkish Government were to publish even an outline of the reforms which they intend to introduce and if the Powers were assured that it was the firm intention of the Turkish Government to establish a thoroughly stable and good administration.

I made it very clear to H[is] H[ighness] that the remarks which I had made were conceived in a perfectly friendly spirit and with the object of communicating to him the substance of the information which had reached us as to the state of affairs in Bulgaria and other Balkan States and of making friendly suggestions as to the course which the Turkish Government might perhaps be disposed to take in order to meet the immediate exigencies of the situation.

I told H[is] H[ighness] that I was opposed to making any formal representations at Constantinople as I thought that such steps would embarrass the Turkish Government and that my sole desire was to assist them in carrying out the good intentions with which I knew that they were animated.

Tewfik Pasha replied that he thoroughly understood the friendly spirit which prompted me in what I said and that he would convey my remarks to the Turkish Government.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

No. 745.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 39874/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 445.)

*Foreign Office, September 25, 1912, 6.30 P.M.*Your desp[atch] No. 406 of Sept[ember] 22⁽²⁾: M. Poincaré's proposals.

I have agreed with Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that proposals Nos. 3 and 4 are undesirable, but I am willing to join with France and Russia in proposing Nos. 1 and 2 to Berlin and Vienna.

M. Cambon has been informed of above.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v supra*, pp 702-3, No. 734, and *encl.*]

No. 746.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr Barclay.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 39973/33672/12/44.

(No. 29.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 25, 1912.

The Bulgarian Minister called on the 20th inst[ant] and told Sir A. Nicolson that he had been instructed to lay before me, especially on the eve of the arrival of the Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs],⁽²⁾ the serious situation which existed in the Balkans and the urgent necessity that the Powers should insist on Turkey introducing without delay proper reforms in her European provinces. If "something" were not done (promises were insufficient) at once his Gov[ernmen]t would have very great difficulty in restraining the warlike spirit in Bulgaria. The Minister proceeded in this strain for some time.

Sir A. Nicolson told M. Madjaroff that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnmen]t were well aware of the agitation in his country, and were also acquainted with the fact that Russia had spoken very seriously at Sofia and had given the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t clearly to understand that she and all the Great Powers were of one mind in viewing with the gravest displeasure any warlike adventure or disturbance of the peace. On the other hand the best Gov[ernmen]t which Turkey had enjoyed for generations were animated with the most honest intentions towards the introduction of reforms and the Powers would cordially and sincerely encourage and stimulate Turkey in this excellent direction. But patience must be exercised, and, to speak frankly Sir A. Nicolson could not conceive a greater act of folly than for Bulgaria to "*brusquer*" a situation and imagine that she could by herself impose upon Turkey by force of arms a policy which the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t, if given time, would doubtless introduce and realize. M. Madjaroff would forgive Sir A. Nicolson for saying so, but it was absurd for Bulgaria to risk her future on so hazardous a throw of the dice and incur the ill will and displeasure of all the Great Powers. She herself had nothing to complain of, she was a prosperous independent kingdom and it really would not be worthy of her past were she to render herself the instrument of turbulent and irresponsible Macedonian agitators.

The Minister said that Bulgaria alone might not achieve much, but for the first time for centuries she could count on the co-operation of Serbia, Greece and Montenegro, and this formed a combination powerful enough to impose their will on Turkey.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [For further details about the visit of M. Sazonov to England, *v. infra*, pp. 749-72, Chapter LXXVIII.]

Sir A. Nicolson told him that he was nursing a delusion. It was very doubtful whether Servia and Greece could or would afford any material aid—and moreover these States must take into account the forces arrayed against them. The Powers were fully alive to the desirability of reforms being introduced as soon as possible, and as Sir A. Nicolson had said, they would encourage and assist Turkey by every possible means in doing so, but warlike action on the part of Bulgaria or any other Balkan State would defeat all these objects and would probably prove a great injury to the cause of reform and to the prosperity of the States themselves.

Sir A. Nicolson promised to convey to me what M. Madjaroff had said, and told him that he was expressing my sentiments in what he had said.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

No. 747.

Lord Granville to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Berlin, September 26, 1912.

F.O. 40444/33672/12/44.

D. 1.18 P.M.

Tel. (No. 120.) Confidential.

R. 3.15 P.M.

My telegram No. 114 (Sept[ember] 17).⁽²⁾

I asked Political Director of F[oreign] O[ffice] whether S[ecretary] of S[tate] had yet had an answer to his suggestion that Russia should take the initiative in proposing measures for the localisation of an eventual war in the Balkans.

Political Director looked much puzzled and said that though he knew that S[ecretary] of S[tate] was very anxious for agreement with this object, he was not aware that he had made any suggestion to Russia. Russian chargé d'affaires informs me that S[ecretary] of S[tate] never made such suggestion to him though he referred vaguely to idea having come up in private conversation between Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] and German chargé d'affaires.

My telegram No. 115 of (Sept[ember] 20).⁽³⁾

Russian chargé d'affaires had still had no reply to Russian proposal for representations at C[onstantino]ple.

MINUTE.

This is odd.

We have now had a French proposal for localising a possible conflict.⁽⁴⁾

H. N.
Sept[ember] 26, 1912.
R. P. M.
A. N.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Vienna (as No. 200); to St. Petersburg (as No. 912); to Rome (as No. 328); to Constantinople (as No. 663). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 690, No. 717.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 698, No. 726.]

⁽⁴⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 702-3, No. 734.]

Sir R. Paget to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 40850/33672/12/44.

(No. 60.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. September 26, 1912.

R. September 30, 1912.

In my despatch No. 57 of the 24th instant⁽²⁾ I have mentioned that Monsieur Pashitch did not think that in case of war against Turkey Serbia need seriously apprehend that Austria would attack her. So far as I can gather the Servian Government do not propose, should war break out, to allow themselves to be restrained by any consideration in this connection. They recognise the futility of endeavouring to oppose Austria and their idea is therefore said to be to join Bulgaria with all the forces at their disposal (about 164,000 men) leaving Belgrade and the North entirely unprotected and in the event of Austrian troops entering Servian territory to appeal to the Powers for justice.

No attempt to induce the Servian Government to dissociate themselves from Bulgaria is likely to succeed as in addition to the question of interests in Macedonia they fear the Bulgarian Government would, if balked in this manner of going to war with Turkey, turn round upon Serbia and come to some arrangement with Austria about Serbia and Macedonia.

My Russian Colleague Monsieur de Hartwig is of opinion that whilst negotiations are certainly in progress between Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro with a view to presenting a demand for reforms to Turkey there is good reason to believe that the Servian Government will not be drawn into taking any decisive step without first consulting the Powers.

The Government organ the "Samouprava" of the 24th instant has a long leading article on the present situation in which among other passages intended to reassure the public it says :

"There can be no serious warlike complications against the wish of the Great Powers. The Balkans have penetrated so far into the region of the great interests of Europe that the idea of any Power either great or small acting merely in its own interests is excluded. This circumstance removes the danger of war more or less indefinitely."

I have, &c.

RALPH PAGET.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the War Office.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 710-2, No 743.]

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Sofia, September 27, 1912.

F.O. 40599/33672/12/44.

D. 4.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 40.)

R. 4.10 P.M.

Mr. Marling's tel[egram] No. 394.⁽²⁾

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] apparently was not satisfied with reasons given by Turkish M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] for calling out of redifs⁽³⁾ and

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. This telegram, D. September 24, 8 P.M., R. September 25, 10.25 A.M., reported the explanation of the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs that the troops were being assembled for the usual manœuvres. (F.O. 40201/33672/12/44.)]

⁽³⁾ [*i.e.*, reserves.]

asked for further explanations at C[onstantino]ple. M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] told Russian Minister that excuse given to Bulgarian Representative that increase of Turkish troops on frontier would help Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t to calm agitation here was almost an insult.

Sent to C[onstantino]ple.

No. 750.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Paget.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 40718/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 22)

Foreign Office, September 27, 1912, 5.25 P.M.

Russian Rep[resentati]ves at Belgrade, Sofia, Athens and C[ettin]jé have been instructed strongly to deprecate a proposed formal joint representation of these four States to Great Powers.

You should do the same if French Rep[resentati]ves are similarly instructed. See my tel[egram] No. 454 to Sir F. Bertie (of to-day).⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent also to Count de Salis (No. 71); to Mr. Barclay (No. 71); to Mr. Beaumont (No. 172). It was repeated to Paris (No. 455); to Berlin (No. 209), to Vienna (No. 203); to Rome (No. 331); to Constantinople (No. 670); to St. Petersburg (No. 918). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately succeeding document.]

No. 751.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 40718/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 454.)

Foreign Office, September 27, 1912, 5.30 P.M.

Inform French Gov[ernmen]t of instructions sent to H[is] M[ajesty's] Re[presentativ]es at Balkan capitals (see my tel[egram] No. 22 to Belgrade (of to-day)),⁽²⁾ and say that reason for step taken by Great Britain, France and Russia would be that proposed representation by four Balkan States would make it appear that everything subsequently done by Turkey was under pressure. This would make it more difficult for Turkey to proceed in favourable direction in which she is now going. It would also appear to be an attempt to force the hands of the great Powers who are already acting in the way they consider most likely to be effective at this moment.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Berlin (No. 208); to Vienna (No. 202); to St. Petersburg (No. 917); to Rome (No. 330); to Constantinople (No. 669); to Belgrade (No. 21); to Sofia (No. 70); to Athens (No. 171); to C[ettin]jé (No. 70). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 752.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Eduard Grey.⁽¹⁾*Sofia, September 28, 1912.*⁽²⁾

F.O. 40825/33672/12/44.

D. 8.30.

Tel. (No. 41.) Urgent.

R. 8.40.

My telegram No. 40 of Sept[ember] 27.⁽³⁾

I learn that Cabinet not finding explanations of Porte satisfactory decided last night to commence mobilisation to-morrow. Cabinet meets this afternoon under Presidency of King for final decision.

Sent to Constantinople and Belgrade.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]⁽²⁾ [The times of despatch and receipt are here given as in original]⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp 716-7, No. 749.]

No. 753.

Lord Granville to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾*Berlin, September 28, 1912.*

F.O. 40741/33672/12/44.

D. 8.20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 122.)

R. 10 P.M.

Balkans.

Your telegram No. 454 (Sept[ember] 27) to Paris⁽²⁾ and No. 22 (Sept[ember] 27⁽³⁾) to Belgrade.

I informed Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to-day of instructions sent to British representatives in four Balkan States, and of reasons for those instructions. His Excellency highly approved, made a note of four capitals, and said he would send similar instructions.

My telegram No. 120 (Sept[ember] 26).⁽⁴⁾

I asked Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he had yet had an answer to his suggestion to Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs that Russia should take initiative in proposing localisation agreement. His Excellency said he had not actually proposed this to M. Sazonof, but had suggested it to him as he was on the point of departure; it was therefore natural that he had not yet had an answer. M. Paleologue had expressed concurrence in idea, but doubt as to who would take initiative. German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had replied that when M. Sazonof was in Paris he had better urge him to do so.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent as follows.—

Paragraph 1 to Paris (as No. 461); to St. Petersburg (as No. 924); to Vienna (as No. 205); to Constantinople (as No. 680); to Rome (as No. 333); to Sofia (as No. 44); to Belgrade (as No. 24); to Cettinje (as No. 74), to Athens (as No. 177).

Paragraph 2 to St. Petersburg (as No. 925); to Paris (as No. 462); to Vienna (as No. 206); to Constantinople; to Rome (as No. 337); to Sofia (as No. 75); to Belgrade (as No. 25).

A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v supra*, p. 717, No. 751.]⁽³⁾ [*v supra*, p. 717, No. 750.]⁽⁴⁾ [*v supra*, p. 715, No. 747.]

No. 754.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 40992/38672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 676.)

Foreign Office, September 29, 1912, 11.30 P.M.

I have agreed to a proposal of the Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that the Powers should advise Turkish G[overnment]t not to move their Redifs to the frontier if the Balkan States do not mobilize. You should give this advice if all your colleagues are similarly instructed, and you should add that if all the Powers concur representations will be made at Belgrade Athens Sofia and Cetinje strongly urging those States not to mobilize, or to move troops to the frontier. You will of course take no steps till your colleagues are also authorised to do so.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Paris (No. 459); to Berlin (No. 210); to Vienna (No. 204), with instructions to "Communicate above to G[overnment]t to which you are accredited and enquire if they would be prepared to send instructions in above sense." It was also repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 927) without the addendum.]

No. 755.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Barclay ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 40992/38672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 73.)

Foreign Office, September 29, 1912, 11.30 P.M.

If all your colleagues receive similar instructions you should urge G[overnment]t to which you are accredited to take no steps for mobilization or for moving troops to the frontier. Otherwise Turkish G[overnment]t will probably send Redifs to their own frontiers.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent also to Mr. Beaumont (No. 176); to Sir R. Paget (No. 23); to Count de Sals (No. 73).]

No. 756.

Sir R. Paget to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾*Belgrade, September 30, 1912.*

F.O. 41064/38672/12/44.

D. 2 P.M.

Tel. (No. 15.)

R. 4.45 P.M.

Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs told me this morning that reports of mobilisation from Turkey have had an unfortunate effect on the situation, and that Servian Government would have to mobilise.

The information just received by Servian Government is that the second inspection comprising the Salonica, Monastir, Uskub Army Corps of fifty-eight battalions, divisions of Drama, Serres, Uskub, and Mitroviza, have been mobilised. Ibrahim Pasha is said to have asked for 50,000 rifles for arming population and Bashi Bazouks.

I said that information I had received was that Turkish Government had abandoned their original scheme of grand manœuvres, but Under-Secretary of State maintained his information to be correct, and that Turkish Minister for Foreign

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

Affairs had declared to Bulgarian Minister at Constantinople that Turkey was mobilising.

Under-Secretary of State further said that Servian Government would probably recall their Minister from Constantinople, as the Turkish Government are obdurate over the war material question.

Russian Minister informs me that two days ago Bulgarian Government sent a request to Servian Government to commence mobilisation in twenty-four hours, but that he was able to induce Servian Government to postpone giving order.

There is, however, no doubt that everything is fully prepared for mobilisation here and order may be given at any moment.

I have not taken any steps in the sense of your telegrams Nos. 22 Sept[ember] 27⁽²⁾ and 23, Sept[ember] 29,⁽³⁾ as my French colleague has had no instructions as yet.

Notwithstanding change for the worse in the situation, there seems no real nervousness in financial circles, and there seems to be an impression that the Balkan States desire to push matters as far as possible short of actual war.

(Sent to Constantinople and Sophia.)

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 717, No. 750.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 719, No. 755, and note ⁽¹⁾]

[ED. NOTE.—General mobilization was ordered by the Kings of Servia and the Bulgarians on the 30th September, and by the King of Greece on the 1st October. General mobilization was decreed in Turkey in reply to Servia and Bulgaria on the 1st October.]

No. 757.

Mr. Beaumont to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Athens, September 30, 1912.

F.O. 41021/83672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 44.)

D. 7 P.M.

R. 10 P.M.

Your telegram No. 176 (Sept[ember] 29).⁽²⁾

Decision to mobilise has not yet been taken. Russian chargé d'affaires is speaking this afternoon in the sense desired, and I will take first opportunity of doing the same.

There has apparently been some difficulty in bringing Servia into line, and it is unlikely that any of the four States will act separately.

There has been similar difficulty with regard to joint representation referred to in your telegram No. 172 (Sept[ember] 27),⁽³⁾ and it is at least possible that idea will be abandoned.

MINUTE.

Mr. Beaumont was instructed to speak *if all his* Colleagues were similarly instructed. He sh[oul]d not act independently, but as Greece has mobilized it does not much matter whether he speaks or not.

A. N.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 719, No. 755, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 717, No. 750, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

No. 758.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*Sofia, September 30, 1912.*

F.O. 41023/33672/12/44.

D. 9 P.M.

Tel (No. 44.)

R. 10 P.M.

Your telegram No. 73 (Sept[ember] 29).⁽²⁾

None of my colleagues have so far received similar instructions except Russian Minister.

When he communicated them to Minister for Foreign Affairs, latter replied that it was too late. Royal ukases ordering mobilisation would be published in a few hours in Bulgaria, Servia, and Greece.

(Sent to Constantinople and Belgrade.)

MINUTE.

There is nothing to be done by us apart from what the other Powers may do.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 472); to St. Petersburg (as No. 934); to Vienna (as No. 210); to Berlin (as No. 215); to Rome (as No. 340); to Athens (as No. [?]); to Cettinje (as No. 79). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 719, No. 755.]

No. 759.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*Sofia, September 30, 1912.*

F.O. 41025/33672/12/44.

D. 9.

Tel. (No. 46.) Confidential.

R. 11.

My telegram No. 45 (Sept[ember] 30).⁽²⁾

M. Danef, probably sent by the King, has called on Russian Minister to tell him that the only means now left to avert war is the application of article 23 of Treaty of Berlin and the appointment of foreign Christian vali under the guarantee of the Powers. War would therefore seem inevitable. There is no bluff this time.

(Sent to Constantinople and Belgrade.)

MINUTE.

It is unlikely that Turkey c[oul]d grant reforms under menace, and, if Mr. Barclay is correct in saying there is no bluff, his deduction is also logical. Bulgaria has disregarded all warnings and the blame for what follows will be entirely hers. Any repetition of those warnings will be fruitless, unless Turkey can be induced to give some sop at once, and this the Bulgarians have rendered almost impossible.

R. G. V.

Oct[ober] 1.

R. P. M.

A. N.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 478); to Vienna (as No. 245); to Rome (as No. 342); to St. Petersburg (as No. 936); to Berlin (as No. 217); to Athens (as No. 183); to Cettinje (as No. 81). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. This telegram, D. 8-30 P.M., R. 10 P.M., reported the order for general mobilization in Bulgaria. (F.O. 41024/33672/12/44.)]

No. 760.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Beaumont.

F.O. 40716/16312/12/44.

(No. 68.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 30, 1912.

The Greek Minister, under instructions from his Gov[ernmen]t, informed Sir A. Nicolson that they understood that Italy did not intend to retain any of the Ægean islands: that some Powers had expressed a desire that she should not do so, but that some guarantees as to the future would be obtained from Turkey before the islands were definitely retroceded. The Greek Gov[ernmen]t wished to suggest that the Powers should see that a régime similar to that of Samos or of the Lebanon should be established for the Sporades under a Christian Gov[erno]r-Gen[era]l selected by the Powers. It would, of course, be impossible to replace the islands exactly in the same political status as before—and an autonomy under Turkish suzerainty would be the best solution.

Sir A. Nicolson told M. Gennadius that he would report this communication and that he had no remark to make. M. Gennadius asked if Sir A. Nicolson would emit an opinion. Sir A. Nicolson asked to be excused from doing so.

Sir A. Nicolson took the opportunity of saying to M. Gennadius that he felt sure that M. Venizelos was too prudent and reasonable a statesman to be affected by the somewhat wild talk which was being held at Sofia and Belgrade, and would keep Greece peaceful and quiet. M. Gennadius said he was sure M. Venizelos was most anxious that peace should be preserved, but that he feared that if a conflict did break out in the Balkans it would be very difficult for Greece to keep out of it.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 761.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Paget.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 40588/83672/12/44.

(No. 12.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 30, 1912.

The Servian Ch[argé] d'Aff[aire]s called on the 23rd inst[ant] and expatiated to Sir A. Nicolson on the warlike spirit existing in his country, the difficulty of keeping it within bounds, and the urgent necessity of the Powers inducing Turkey to grant immediate reforms.

Sir A. Nicolson told M. Gruitch that his Gov[ernmen]t should restrain the hotheads in his country, as the Powers were all unanimous that peace must be maintained and that anyone who disturbed it would do so at his risk and peril. It would be most imprudent for Servia to endeavour of herself to undertake the task of bringing pressure to bear on Turkey.

M. Gruitch said that Bulgaria and Servia in combination, if left to themselves, could very well bring Turkey to reason.

Sir A. Nicolson replied that it was really a head-strong and risky policy to contemplate any hostile action against Turkey, contrary to the wishes and in face of the warnings of all the Powers. Such a course of action would in all probability be disastrous to those who embarked on it, and was scarcely the best method of inducing Turkey to initiate reforms. He would very strongly counsel peace, patience, and moderation.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

M. Gruitch asked whether H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnmen]t had used similar language to Bulgaria, and Sir A. Nicolson said that Great Britain and other Powers had done so, both to her and to Montenegro.

M. Gruitch observed that Servia, Montenegro and Bulgaria had never been so united before. Sir A. Nicolson said that if they were united in the cause of peace all would be well.

M. Gruitch continued to elaborate his views as to the danger of the situation—views with which we are well acquainted—and Sir A. Nicolson said that all he could advise was that no hostile or hasty action should be taken, but peace preserved and patience exercised.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

No. 762.

Count de Sals to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Cettinje, October 1, 1912.

F.O. 41193/38672/12/44.

D. 5.40.

Tel. (No. 25.)

R. 6.30.

Your telegram No. 73 (Sept[ember] 29).⁽²⁾

Russian Minister made a representation in this sense yesterday.

King confined himself to giving assurance that he would be the last of the Balkan Sovereigns to mobilise.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 719, No. 755, and *note* (1).]

No. 763.

Count de Sals to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Cettinje, October 1, 1912.

F.O. 41279/38672/12/44.

D. 5 P.M.

Tel. (No. 26.)

R. 10 P.M.

Orders were issued this morning to prepare for mobilisation.

(Sent to Constantinople.)

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Sofia (as No. 81); to Athens (as No. 186); to St. Petersburg (as No. 948); to Belgrade (as No. 31); to Paris (as No. 483); to Vienna (as No. 219); to Constantinople (as No. 695); to Bucharest (as No. 13); to Rome (as No. 347); to Berlin (as No. 221). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 764.

Sir G. Louther to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 41195/38672/12/44.

Pera, D. October 1, 1912, 10.40 P.M.

Tel. (No. 418.)

R. October 2, 1912, 8 A.M.

In reply to Servian and Bulgarian mobilisation, Turkish Gov[ernmen]t have now decreed general mobilisation, which probably includes all effectives except those of Kurdistan and Mesopotamia.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Sofia; to Belgrade; to Athens; to Vienna; to Paris (as No. 486); to St. Petersburg (as No. 952); to Rome (as No. 351); to Berlin (as No. 225); to Cettinje (as No. 86); to Bucharest (as No. 15). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 765.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 41210/33672/12/44.*

Pera, D. October 1, 1912, 11.49 P.M.

Tel. (No. 417.) Urgent.

R. October 2, 1912, 8 A.M.

I have seen M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs]. In view of orders for general mobilisation in Bulgaria, Servia and Greece, Turkey has no alternative but to defend herself and H[is] E[xc]ellency regards danger of war (?as) imminent. But Gov[ernmen]t consider attack absolutely unprovoked in view of the fact that general programme of present Gov[ernmen]t was one of reform not only in European provinces of Turkey but in Asia Minor and every effort was being made to bring authors of Kochana massacres to justice.

In the opinion of the Ottoman Gov[ernmen]t the only possibility of avoiding war is for Austria-Hungary, if her intentions are peaceful, of which the Minister does not seem quite certain, to use very peremptory language at Belgrade but the Minister did not seem very confident that Germany would be inclined to exercise a restraining influence on her ally. It would also be necessary for Great Britain to bring pressure to bear at Athens if necessary by a blockade. An attack by Greece on the islands will in his opinion lead to most serious carnage in Asia Minor which the Gov[ernmen]t would be unable to check, and unprovoked attack on Turkey by Christian Powers would not fail to have its effect throughout islamic countries.

MINUTES.

Para[graph] 1. The contention of the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t cannot be gainsaid.

Para[graph] 2. Servia and Athens have both been dragged in the train of Bulgaria, and pressure, to be effective, w[oul]d have to begin at Sofia. Servia has weighed the Austrian risk, and in spite of it has allowed herself to be led to the verge of the adventure. The suggestion that we sh[oul]d blockade Athens is a wild one.

In connection with the end of para[graph] 2, I w[oul]d like to take this opportunity of pointing out that Egypt, not only in the towns but in the provinces, is full of Greeks. The smaller ones live among the natives. It is quite likely that they will have a bad time if war breaks out.

Lord Kitchener will naturally do all that is possible to prevent trouble and to protect the Greeks, but it w[oul]d be difficult in the provinces, and it might be worth communicating with him on the subject. If there is any attempt at serious rioting, we shall have to recall the best police from the Cyrenaican frontier for duty in the interior.

R. G. V.

Oct[ober] 2.

This tel[egram] might be repeated to Lord Kitchener and his attention called to possible danger to the Greeks in Egypt.

R. P. M.

This tel[egram] has been repeated to L[or]d Kitchener as Mr. Maxwell has suggested—and his attention called to the danger to the Greeks.

[A. N.]

If Bulgaria insists on going to war Greece and Servia are bound to go with her: neither Greece nor Servia will dare to fight without Bulgaria: Sophia is therefore the key to the whole and we can do nothing more there.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Belgrade; to Sofia; to Athens; to Vienna; to Berlin (as No. 220); to Paris (as No. 480); to St. Petersburg (as No. 945); to Rome (as No. 346); to Cettinje (as No. 88); to Bucharest (as No. 12). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 766.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 40992/33672/12/44.

(No. 245.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 1, 1912.

*H[err] v[on] Kühlmann read to Sir A. Nicolson on Sept[ember] 28 a telegram from Herr von Kiderlen to the effect that the Bulgarian Min[ister] had stated that the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t considered that the mobilization of the Turkish Redifs was a menace and if persisted in would compel Bulgaria to take such measures as she might consider necessary. The Bulgarian Min[iste]r had added that perhaps the Powers would take steps at Constantinople with the view of inducing Turkey to counter-order the mobilization.

Herr v[on] Kiderlen would not object to giving this advice at Const[antino]ple if the other Powers associated themselves in the step, and if Bulgaria were to give some positive proof that she would adopt a peaceful attitude.

Sir A. Nicolson told H[err] v[on] Kühlmann that he would report this communication to me. Sir A. Nicolson added as his personal opinion that if the Powers were to approach Turkey on that point, she would probably reply that in view of what was passing near her frontiers, and the language and attitude of the Balkan States, she was compelled to take certain preparatory measures, and that she could not abandon them unless the Powers were to guarantee that none of the Balkan States would disturb the peace. Sir A. Nicolson did not know if the Powers would be disposed or able to give such a guarantee. Sir A. Nicolson gave H[err] v[on] Kühlmann in outline what had been said to Tewfik P[ash]a and to the various Balkan States, and pointed out that Turkey had apparently abandoned her intention of holding manœuvres in the Adrianople vilayet.

[I am, &c.

E. GREY.]

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch was based on a minute by Sir A. Nicolson, dated September 28, 1912, describing the interview. Sir Edward Grey noted at the end:—

“The proposal of M. Sazonov to advise the Balkan States not to mobilize and simultaneously to ask Turkey not to move her troops to the frontier if the Balkan States do not mobilize would meet the German view, if carried out as I proposed, viz., by instructing our representatives to act in this way if the other Powers including Germany and Austria will do the same, and informing the other Powers of the instructions sent. E. G.”]

No. 767.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Barclay.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 41191/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 80.)

Foreign Office, October 2, 1912, 12.30 P.M.

You should associate yourself in any representations in regard to which all your colleagues have received instructions from their respective Governments respecting advice to Gov[ernmen]t to which you are accredited to counter-order mobilization or to refrain from dispatching troops to the frontier.

You will understand that you should not take any action until all your colleagues have received identic instructions.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent also to Sir R. Paget (No. 80); to Mr. Beaumont (No. 185); to Count de Salis (No. 82). It was drafted as the result of the receipt of a telegram from Sir R. Paget (No. 17) stating that all his colleagues had not received instructions, and that he would urge on Servian Government to avoid the movement of troops to the frontier. He had been informed by the Russian Minister that mobilisation in Servia, according to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, would not be complete for a fortnight. (F.O. 41191/33672/12/44.)]

No. 768.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*Sofia, October 2, 1912.*

D. 8.30 P.M.

R. 6.10 P.M.

F.O. 41349/38672/12/44.

Tel. *En clair.*

Sobranjé convoked in extraordinary session for 5th October.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations]

No. 769.

Lord Granville to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*Berlin, October 2, 1912.*

D. 5.45 P.M.

R. 9 P.M.

F.O. 41351/38672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 126.)

Servian chargé d'affaires declares that Bulgaria will be ready to-morrow and Serbia on Friday, and he hopes, and evidently thinks it probable, that war will be declared this week in order not to give time to the Powers to exercise pressure and to the Porte to complete her preparations. He says that the whole business is engineered by Bulgaria, and he realises that Serbia stands to gain least and suffer most. He is convinced that Austria-Hungary will occupy Belgrade at once, and says that Serbia has mobilised 800,000 men, which means that she expects to have to defend herself against Austria-Hungary, as 200,000 would have been enough for fighting Turkey. Defence against Austria-Hungary would be of guerrilla nature, so that Austria-Hungary would require very large force and much time to make any effect. Belgrade itself would no doubt be evacuated at once. He has been told, but not by his own Government, that Serbo-Bulgarian treaty includes a clause that they shall only attack Turkey when they receive word from Russia, and he is convinced, though M. Sazonof and even M. Kokowzew may have nothing to do with it, Bulgaria and Serbia are being pushed on by Russian influences.

Greek chargé d'affaires is less optimistic than he was, but still seems to think that war will be avoided by grant of some concessions. He believes even Bulgarians do not really want to fight.

German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs takes line to me and all my colleagues, even those of Balkan States, that war is probably now inevitable, and that we must see to its localisation, but he makes no definite suggestions.

MINUTE.

According to our inform[atio]n Serbia cannot get together 300,000 nor even 200,000 men. The Servian Chargé d'Affaires estimate of Russia's attitude is equally wide of the mark; and Austria has, anyhow as yet, made no special preparations that point towards the imminence of such a step as he anticipates. See 41353.⁽²⁾ We knew already that the Servians w[oul]d probably leave Belgrade bare.

It seems unfortunate that the German M[inister, for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] sh[oul]d tell the Balkan States R[epresentatives] that war is inevitable.

Q[uer]y unnecessary to repeat this.

R. G. V

Oct[ober] 3.

R. P. M.

A. N.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. This telegram No. 87 from Vienna, dated October 2, 1912, D. 8.50 P.M., R. 10.45 P.M., stated that Austria-Hungary was making no move, and that Minister of War had denied rumours of mobilization. (F.O. 41353/38672/12/44.)]

No. 770.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Paris, October 2, 1912.

F.O. 41350/33672/12/44.

D. 8.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 145.)

R. 10.30 P.M.

Bulgarian Minister has this afternoon communicated to French Minister for Foreign Affairs demands of the Balkan States. They are :—

1. Nomination by the Porte with the consent of the Powers of a Swiss or Belgian Governor-General.
2. Institution of legislative assemblies.
3. Creation of local gendarmeries.
4. Carrying out of reforms under the supervision of the Ambassadors of the Great Powers and of the representatives at Constantinople of the four Balkan States.

Minister for Foreign Affairs told me that he had said to Bulgarian Minister that for four Balkan Governments to mobilise, and then to ask the Powers' support for such demands, failing which there would be war was putting the knife to your throat. The mobilisation had been unnecessary, and what was necessary now was that troops of Balkan States should not be concentrated, so that the Powers might consider what could reasonably be done; for to put forward such demands as Bulgarian Minister had communicated to him would be to provoke Turkey to war.

Minister for Foreign Affairs considers that best chance of averting war would be an understanding between Russia and Austria to put restraining pressure on Bulgaria and Servia pending a consideration of the situation by the Powers. He fears, however, from a conversation this afternoon with the Russian Ambassador, that the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, who arrives at Paris this evening, will propose that the Powers should present to the Porte a programme of reforms which it is not likely to accept.

MINUTE.

We need take no steps till we are approached.

A. N.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Berlin (as No. 220); to Vienna (as No. 225); to St. Petersburg (as No. 961); to Constantinople (as No. 704); to Sofia (as No. 85); to Cetinje (as No. 89); to Belgrade (as No. 35); to Bucharest (as No. 17); to Athens (as No. 194). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 771.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 41362/33672/12/44.

Sofia, D. October 2, 1912.

Tel. (No. 48.)

R. October 3, 1912, 10 A.M.

I have just seen M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] and asked him what was going to happen now that the Turks had ordered general mobilisation. Would it be possible I urged as a personal suggestion to relieve tension by bringing about a gradual demobilisation on both sides. He replied that it was too late; no pressure however [strong] from the Powers would bring about demobilisation it would only

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Berlin (as No. 227); to St. Petersburg (as No. 959); to Paris (as No. 492); to Vienna (as No. 223). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

accelerate outbreak of conflict. Besides demobilisation would probably mean the downfall of the King. He maintained that Turkey had started by sending large numbers of troops to the frontier and in consequence Bulgaria had been obliged to order mobilisation in self-defence. Servia and Greece had joined her, they were united in a common cause and nothing would separate them.

I said I had heard Balkan states wanted application of article 23 of Berlin treaty⁽²⁾ and appointment of foreign Christian Valis but if that was their minimum there seemed to be little chance of arriving at a peaceful solution. Turkey would not accord such demands and Powers were not prepared to enforce them upon Turkey. He replied that Balkan states would endeavour to enforce their demands on Turkey. But I could not extract from him actual demands of Balkan states.

H[is] E[xcellency] said that he had received news from Monastir to the effect that young Turks were regaining the upper hand; present Turkish Gov[ernmen]t was doomed; he could not understand how England could rely on such a broken reed as Kiamill Pasha; no Turkish Gov[ernmen]t would ever be strong enough to carry out serious reforms. The perpetual state of unrest in the Balkans must cease. Language held by Russia at Sofia and especially at Belgrade had after all her past encouragement provoked unspeakable revulsion of feeling. Bulgaria hoped that present British Gov[ernmen]t would remain faithful to the traditions of Mr. Gladstone.

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs'] attitude was calm and there is no doubt that Bulgaria has made up her mind to go to all lengths.

Sent to C[onstantino]ple and Belgrade.

(²) [v. *supra*, p. 680, No. 679, and note (²).]

No. 772.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.(¹)

F.O. 41863/33672/12/44.

Sofia, D. October '2, 1912.

Tel. (No. 49.)

R. October 3, 1912, 10.30 A.M.

My immediately preceding tel[egram] (Oct[ober] 3).(²)

Servian Minister has held to me only more forcibly same language as M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs]. He said that should Russia carry out her threat and not move in case Austria entered Servia, Servia would die fighting and

(K) turning round become one of the most faithful adjuncts of Austria.⁽³⁾ The moment had now come for triple entente to decide (? unequivocally) between propping up a decaying Turkey with consequent advance of Austria to Aegean or a solid block of friendly Balkan states, including Turkey herself ultimately against Austrian expansion.

Views of Servian Minister are important in as much as he has been a leading factor in bringing about present situation.

Sent to C[onstantino]ple and Belgrade.

(¹) [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

(²) [v. immediately preceding document.]

(³) [The form of this sentence and the position of the cypher sign (K) are both reproduced from the original decypher.]

No. 773.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. T. Russell.

F.O. 41615/38672/12/44.

(No. 61.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 2, 1912.

Sir A. Nicolson told C[oun]t Trauttmansdorff to-day that we had sent instructions to the 4 Balkan Capitals, as desired by C[oun]t Berchtold, to urge the various Gov[ernmen]ts to demobilize and not to move troops to the frontier.⁽¹⁾ In fact Sir A. Nicolson said that our Re[presentative]s at those capitals had now received general instructions to associate themselves with all their colleagues in the above sense and direction, if their colleagues received instructions. As to saying anything at Constantinople, as desired by C[oun]t Berchtold, to the effect that Turkey should not send redifs to the frontier we had not done so, firstly, because, since his request had been made, Turkey had been compelled to mobilize; and secondly, because the pressure should first be placed on the Balkan States as they had been the first to mobilize.

Sir A. Nicolson also told C[oun]t Trauttmansdorff, as M. Sazonow had desired that he should do, that he hoped C[oun]t Berchtold would keep in close touch with his Russian colleague, and that Austria would not take any measures which might excite Russian public opinion. Sir A. Nicolson gathered, he said, from M. Sazonow that the latter was fairly confident that Russian public opinion would not become unmanageable so long as a conflict, if one were to break out, were confined to the Balkan States and Turkey, but that the case might be otherwise if Austria were to advance for instance into Servia. Sir A. Nicolson hoped C[oun]t Berchtold would consider these observations as quite unofficial and friendly—but we were very anxious that Austria and Russia should have no differences, and also that all the Powers should act together. Austria and Russia were the most directly interested and the closer they kept together the better.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

(1) [*v. supra*, p. 725, No. 767.]

No. 774.

Mr. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 41498/38672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 50.)

Sofia, October 3, 1912.

D. 5.40 P.M.

R. 9 P.M.

Balkan States will probably early next week present a memorandum to Powers and to the Porte demanding application of article 23 of the Berlin Treaty⁽²⁾ and appointment of foreign Christian valis under the guarantee of the Powers, accompanied by declaration that they will respect present territorial *status quo*.

In view of heavy expenditure entailed by mobilisation and of extreme state of tension of public feeling, which will not allow time for lengthy discussion once army is concentrated on frontier, French Minister has suggested to his Government that the Powers should at once exchange views as to the answer that should be returned to the memorandum of the Balkan States. He has suggested that Powers should

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Cettinje, Belgrade, Athens, Bucharest. A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 660, No. 679, and note (2).]

take official note of above-mentioned communication and of formal engagement as to the observance of territorial *status quo*, adding that Powers are collectively resolved to make that engagement binding on all parties whatever may be the consequences of a conflict.

This will, in French Minister's opinion, secure non-intervention on part of Austria-Hungary, as she could hardly refuse, without showing her hand, to associate herself with other Powers.

Matter is urgent, as the concentration of troops will be completed before the end of next week.

MINUTE

Take no action on this telegram.

A. N
E. G

No. 775.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

St. Petersburg, October 3, 1912

F.O. 41490/33672/12/44.

D. 8.6.

Tel. (No. 350.)

R. 10.30.

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs told me that nothing could now prevent war breaking (?) unless Powers would agree to take question of reforms in hand themselves and to insist at Constantinople on their immediate application. As it would be impossible to induce all the Powers to take such a step, he looked on war as inevitable and thought that Bulgaria and Servia would be ready to move in five days' time.

Russian public had so far accepted the situation calmly enough, and would, he believed, maintain their present attitude so long as Austria-Hungary did not move. He feared, however, that when war broke out Austria-Hungary would at once occupy sanjak, and in that case public opinion in this country would be roused to danger point.

View thus expressed by his Excellency is, I believe, correct. In the conversation with the Emperor, reported in my despatch No. 66,⁽²⁾ His Majesty said that were the Balkan States to be involved in war with Turkey there would be such an ebullition of Slav sympathy in Russia that, much as he desired peace, it would be impossible for him to remain quiet. Even if Austria-Hungary does not take sanjak, it will be difficult for the Russian Government not to intervene should Bulgaria suffer reverses. It seems, therefore, essential if war is to be localised that Austria-Hungary and Russia should engage not to take any separate action.

Tone of Russian press has considerably cooled towards England during last few days in consequence of disappointment of hope that had been entertained that Balmoral meeting would bring about some combined action on the part of Triple *Entente* in connection with Balkan question.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 497); to Vienna (as No. 227); to Berlin (as No. 232); to Sofia (as No. 87); to Bucharest (as No. 20); to Rome (as No. 360); to Constantinople (as No. 714), to Belgrade (as No. 38); to Cetinje (as No. 92)]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 546-9, No. 553.]

No. 776.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

Pera, October 4, 1912.

F.O. 41614/83672/12/44.

D. 1.45.

Tel. (No. 427.)

R. 3.30.

Paris telegram No. 145.⁽²⁾

Popular feeling in favour of war is being roused, meetings and demonstrations being organised, press is united in advice to sink party differences against a common enemy, its tone being distinctly warlike. Under these circumstances it would seem all but impossible that any Turkish Government could accept any compromise or listen now to proposals such as suggested by Bulgarian Minister at Paris or even a programme for reform put forward by the Powers as foreshadowed in last sentence of that telegram.

Confidential.

In spite of apparent confidence of public in eventual success of Turkish arms the higher Commanders are beginning to realise their unpreparedness and the difficulties they will have in concentrating their armies.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 727, No. 770.]

No. 777.

Sir G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 41656/83672/12/44.

Bucharest, D. October 4, 1912, 11.15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 55.)

R. October 5, 1912, 8 A.M.

Minister for Foreign Affairs told me to-day that Roumania has no intention of mobilising, but that she will continue in the calm attitude she has observed hitherto. He sets his hope on the Great Powers acting in agreement in the present crisis, and in this case Roumania will act with them as regards Balkan questions in docile accord. Should the Great Powers disagree, she will then consider what course to follow.

His Excellency considers it fortunate that the recent heavy rains have restricted the scope of the Roumanian autumn manœuvres which were to have been held in the Dobrutcha, but are now confined to the Ploeshti district.

(Confidential.)

His Excellency told me that last week Turkish Government informed Roumanian Minister at Constantinople that concentration of Turkish troops near Bulgarian frontier, though ostensibly for manœuvres, was intended to intimidate Bulgaria, and Turkish Government asked Roumania on her side to make some declaration which would frighten Bulgaria. This Roumanian Government refused to do, as they felt it would be more likely to excite than to intimidate Bulgaria.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Belgrade (as No. 42); to Berlin (as No. 234); to Cettinje (as No. 94); to Constantinople (as No. 719); to Paris (as No. 504); to Vienna (as No. 229); to Rome (as No. 313); to St. Petersburg (as No. 972); to Sofia (as No. 90); to Athens (as No. 204). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 41789/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 351.)

St. Petersburg, October 5, 1912.

My telegram No. 350 (Oct[ober] 3).⁽²⁾

In speaking to me to-day of M. Poincaré's last proposal⁽³⁾ Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs said he welcomed it as the only means of stopping the war, though he was doubtful if all the Powers would adhere to it. It was necessary, he added, to base our action on 23rd article of Berlin Treaty, as Balkan States would not (? otherwise) listen to us. He thought from language of Turkish Ambassador here that Turkey wanted to avoid war if possible and that it would be easier for her to yield to pressure of united Europe. Step proposed by M. Poincaré might not therefore be displeasing to her.

His Excellency did not think that any military action would be taken before Wednesday or Thursday unless something unexpected occurred.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 730, No. 775.]

⁽³⁾ [The proposal here mentioned was made by M. Paul Cambon to Sir A. Nicolson confidentially on October 2, having already been submitted by M. Poincaré to M. Isvolski and discussed between M. Sazonov and M. Paul Cambon. The proposal had also been mentioned to Sir A. Nicolson by M. Sazonov "at the railway station this morning just before his departure." It was mentioned again by M. Paul Cambon on October 3 and again on the 4th. It is described *infra*, pp 747-8, No. 800 Sir Edward Grey minuted the note, which Sir A. Nicolson wrote on October 2, "I would support this. E. G." (F.O. 41742/33672/12/44.) *cp. D.D.F.*, 3^{me} Sér., IV, p. 17, No. 21; p 24, No 31; pp. 43-4, No. 43.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 42059/33672/12/44.

(No. 474.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 5, 1912.

Sir A. Nicolson took the opportunity of the Turkish Ambassador's visit on Oct[ober] 5 to sound H[is] H[ighness] as to how far he thought his Gov[ernmen]t would go in the way of realising reforms at this moment or of enabling the Powers to impress on the Balkan States that the execution of reforms in the near future was assured. Tewfik P[ash]a said that he could only give Sir A. Nicolson his personal opinion, and that he was in a calmer atmosphere than that which permeated Constantinople. He thought if the Powers, in a perfectly friendly way, approached the Porte and expressed a desire seriously to discuss reforms, the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t would willingly respond; but the Powers must make it clear that they were acting not at the instigation of the Balkan Gov[ernmen]ts, but on their own initiative. Sir A. Nicolson remarked that perhaps the Porte would give some guarantees as to carrying into execution Art[icle] 23 of the Treaty of Berlin.⁽¹⁾ Tewfik P[ash]a observed that if Art[icle] 23 were mentioned, his Gov[ernmen]t might reply that it was "caduc," as other articles of the Treaty of Berlin had been violated or disregarded to the detriment of Turkey. But H[is] H[ighness] was sure his Gov[ernmen]t would be ready to act in the spirit of Art[icle] 23, and really set to work at reforms when the situation was calm. It was impossible to put any reforms into execution in the present state of things. H[is] H[ighness] also said that great care should be exercised as to the form and manner in which the Powers approached

⁽¹⁾ [*v supra*, p. 660, No. 679, note (2).]

the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t just at the present moment when so much effervescence reigned, or more harm than good would be done. In former days pressure on the Sovereign was possible, as the Sovereign then governed everything, now there was, what he termed, "national sovereignty," and neither the Sultan nor the Gov[ernmen]t could ignore or run counter to national feeling.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

[*ED. NOTE.*—On October 5 Sir A. Nicolson received from M. Paul Cambon the details of a new formula which M. Poincaré proposed should be communicated to the Balkan States and Turkey (F.O. 42632/33672/12/44). The first intimation of this proposal had come in a private telegram from Lord Granville of October 2, R. October 3 (Carnock MSS., Vol. VI of 1912). Its genesis is described in *D.D.F.*, 3^{me} Sér., IV, pp. 5-6, No. 9; pp. 14-5, No. 18, and its text printed *ib.*, pp. 48-9, No. 49. Modifications in the text were proposed both by Count Berchtold (*cp. ib.*, p. 59, No. 62) and by Sir Edward Grey (*v. paragraphs 2-4 of the immediately succeeding document*). In its final form it is given *infra*, pp. 734-5, No. 782; *cp. D.D.F.*, 3^{me} Sér., IV, p. 60, No. 63; *O.U.A.*, IV, pp. 558-9, No. 3973, Annex.]

No. 780.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 41742/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 508.)

Foreign Office, October 6, 1912.

We feel that in view of their great and direct interest in the Balkans cooperation between Russia and Austria is essential to secure preservation of peace; we welcome therefore the proposal that they should make the communication 1 and 2 of M. Poincaré's formula to the Balkan States⁽²⁾ stating that they do so on the ground that the Powers are entering into communication with the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t as to reforms in the European provinces of Turkey.

We suggest that all the five Powers should inform the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t that they take note of the publicly declared intention of the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t to introduce reforms and that they "discuteront immédiatement avec la Sublime Porte dans l'esprit de l'article 23 du Traité de Berlin et de la loi de 1880 les réformes que comporte l'administration de la Turquie d'Europe et les mesures propres à en assurer la réalisation dans l'intérêt des populations, étant entendu que ces réformes ne porteront aucune atteinte à l'intégralité territoriale de l'Empire Ottoman."

To make it clear that it is in the interest of Turkey to accept this proposal I think it would be desirable to add that if Turkey accepts this proposal and gives effect to it the Powers will give a renewed guarantee of the integrity of the Ottoman possessions in Europe, but recognizing that agreement amongst the Powers is essential to any action to preserve the peace I do not make this addendum, if objection is raised to it, a condition of our assent to M. Poincaré's proposal and am prepared to support it as amended above.

I have suggested the omission of the word "Chrésiennes" as the whole population will benefit by reforms and it is undesirable to give the proposal a form that accentuates religious differences or may suggest a motive invidious to Mussulman feeling.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Berlin (No. 236); to Constantinople (No. 722); to Rome (No. 316); to St. Petersburg (No. 978); to Vienna (No. 231).]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 702-8, No. 734, and *encl. cp. supra*, p. 732, No. 778, and *note* (3).]

No. 781.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 41811/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 510.) Urgent.

Foreign Office, October 6, 1912.

My telegram No. 508.⁽²⁾

Since its despatch I have received a new formula from French M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] the text of which I am sending you in another telegram.⁽³⁾

The phrase "prendront en mains" might be construed to mean that the Powers will themselves decide and carry out the reforms, and for this reason I should have preferred some phrase such as "s'occuperont de" but in interest of speedy agreement I agree to text of M. Poincaré's latest proposal understanding that it is already accepted by Russia and Austria. I presume that the last paragraph of all after No. 3 is not intended to form part of the actual communication to be made to the Balkan States; it is not necessary or suitable for that purpose and would prejudice the consequent step at Constantinople.

It is however important to take the consequent step at Constantinople in the form and with the phrases that it will make it easy for Turkey to accept. I hope therefore that Ambassadors at Constantinople in informing the Porte of the communication made to Balkan States will be instructed to say that the realization of reforms depends upon the Balkan States refraining from a breach of the peace and that the Powers hope that Turkey will upon this condition enter at once upon a discussion of reforms.

I should like to add that if Turkey agrees and makes reforms effective the Powers will guarantee the integrity of her possessions in Europe and the British Ambassador will be authorised to join in that if his colleagues are similarly instructed.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 979); to Berlin (No. 237); to Vienna (No. 232); to Constantinople (No. 723) with the following addendum to Constantinople:—

"You can act on this telegram as soon as all your colleagues are similarly instructed, but it should be an idéntic communication and not a collective one, presented in corpore."]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

⁽³⁾ [v. immediately succeeding document.]

No. 782.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 41811/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 511.)

Foreign Office, October 6, 1912.

Following is text referred to in my immediately preceding telegram⁽²⁾:—

"Les Gouvernements Russe et Austro-Hongrois déclareront aux États Balkaniques:—

"1°. que les Puissances réprouvent énergiquement toute mesure susceptible d'amener la rupture de la paix;

"2°. que, s'appuyant sur l'article 23 du traité de Berlin, elles prendront en mains, dans l'intérêt des populations, la réalisation des réformes dans l'administration de la Turquie d'Europe, étant entendu que ces réformes ne porteront aucune atteinte à la souveraineté de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 980); to Constantinople (No. 724); to Berlin (No. 238); to Vienna (No. 238).]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

et à l'intégrité de l'Empire Ottoman: cette déclaration réserve d'ailleurs la liberté des Puissances pour l'étude collective ultérieure des réformes;

"3°. que si la guerre vient néanmoins à éclater entre les États Balkaniques et l'Empire Ottoman, elles n'admettront à l'issue du conflit, aucune modification au statu quo territorial dans la Turquie d'Europe.

Les Puissances feront collectivement, auprès de la Sublime Porte, les démarches dérivant de la précédente déclaration.

No. 788.

Mr. T. Russell to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 41808/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 94.)

Vienna, October 6, 1912.

Balkans.

My telegram No. 92 (Oct[ober] 6).⁽²⁾

A few hours after French Ambassador had (hand)ed French proposals to Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday he received telegraphically from his Government another form drawn up in accordance with alterations suggested by you. This he managed to convey to the Minister for Foreign Affairs late last night before the latter had replied to the original proposal or had even offered any comment upon it. French Ambassador again urged necessity of prompt decision. This morning early he received the Minister's reply, which he immediately transmitted to his Government. While consenting to proposal in principle, Minister for Foreign Affairs suggests one or two alterations, the chief one being that the collective step should not be taken simultaneously at the Balkan capitals and at Constantinople, but that representations to the Porte should be deferred until the result of the action of the Powers in the former places was ascertained.

French Ambassador thinks that this suggestion was prompted by Germany with object of gaining a good mark at Constantinople.

German Ambassador, whom I have just seen, did not seem to consider that Minister for Foreign Affairs' reply would produce complete unanimity among Powers, but expressed hope that question would be finally settled on arrival of Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs to-morrow in Berlin.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 522); to St. Petersburg (as No. 992); to Berlin (as No. 248). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It stated that the French Ambassador had submitted the latest French proposal on the 5th and that Count Berchtold had deferred expressing an opinion on it. (F.O. 41800/33672/12/44.)]

No. 784.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 41811/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 152.)

Paris, October 6, 1912.

Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs came by appointment to see me this afternoon. He showed me the Franco-Russian formula for an endeavour to avert war, and on my observing that you might object to the words "prendre en main,"⁽²⁾ he stated to mean merely "take the initiative." He says that he is not sure that his formula as it stands will prevent Bulgaria from going to war, but he feels certain that it is the only hope of doing so, and that without the words ("translate following

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. infra*, pp. 738-9, No. 788.]

into French") "will take in hand," which is a sort of guarantee by the Powers instead of Turkish promises, which experience has shown to the Balkan States to be quite unreliable, it will be impossible to restrain Bulgarians, who have now advantage over Turks of preparedness.

Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs requests me to give you his explanation of "prendre en main," and begs most earnestly that you will adopt his formula, which has been accepted by German and Austro-Hungarian Governments. He feels confident that Turkish Government will not make objection.

No. 785.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 41787/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 432.) Confidential.

Constantinople, October 6, 1912.

My telegram No. 427 (Oct[ober] 4).⁽²⁾

In spite of popular warlike demonstrations, Government will be very reluctant to succumb to efforts of Balkan States to throw responsibility of war on Turkey. A section of the Cabinet have in their (?) minds to propose to Powers spontaneously to introduce reforms, and Minister for Foreign Affairs led me to believe that both he and Kiamil Pasha were in favour of some such course; but as enthusiasm for war increased, moderate element in Cabinet was over-ruled, and it would be scarcely possible now for the Government to make such a surrender.

An effort is being made to secure the appointment of Kiamil Pasha as Grand Vizier. The non-Committee party, recognising Turkey's financial and military unpreparedness, and trusting in confidence inspired by Kiamil Pasha's name internally and in France and in England, hope that he might conclude immediate peace with Italy and ward off the Balkan menace by announcing a liberal scheme of reforms for (group undecypherable: ? European) provinces. Committee press, however, is already protesting loudly against the hasty conclusion of peace with Italy, and, in view of the language held by Bulgarian Minister for Foreign Affairs (see Sophia telegram No. 48),⁽³⁾ Kiamil Pasha's advent to power would not seem likely to facilitate a solution of the Balkan question. It is, moreover, doubtful whether a Kiamil Cabinet could long withstand extremist currents of opinion.

Committee profess to see a close connection between peace negotiations with Italy and the threats from the Balkans, the connecting link being the Berchtold proposals, and it (?) is extremely doubtful whether Moslem feeling now worked up would tolerate application of any liberal scheme in Macedonia which would be interpreted as a weak concession to threats from States which not so long ago were Christian rayahs of Turkey.

MINUTE.

The report is not a favourable one in regard to the prospects of the step now contemplated and the C[ommittee of] U[nion and] P[rogress] are behaving as foolishly as might have been expected.

There w[oul]d be no advantage to Kiamil Pasha in taking over now.

R. G. V.
Oct[ober] 7
R. P. M.
A. N.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Berlin (as No. 239); to Paris (as No. 513); to St. Petersburg (as No. 902); to Vienna (as No. 234); to Rome (as No. 317). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 731, No. 776.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 727-8, No. 771.]

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey ⁽¹⁾

F.O. 41998/33672/12/44.

Paris, D. October 6, 1912.

Tel. (No. 153.)

R. October 7, 1912, 12.30.

Your telegram No. 508 of this afternoon⁽²⁾ did not reach me until after nine p.m. I saw French M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] at his house at 10.30. He had just received from French Ambassador at London your acceptance of Franco-Russia[n] formula for communication to the Balkan States. As expedition is essential he proposes to authorise Austro-Hungarian and Russian Gov[ernmen]ts to carry out Communication forthwith and he hopes that it will be made to-morrow.

With regard to proposed communication to Porte he regrets that—as he hears from Monsieur Cambon—you wish it to be identic but separate and not collective, for a collective communication would be more effective for the purpose of influencing the Balkan Gov[ernmen]ts. M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] concurs in wording which you suggested. Word “chrétien” was struck out at the request of the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t and on their suggestion words were added providing that reforms should not impugn the sovereignty of the Sultan.

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] has personally no objection to your proposed addition that Powers will, if the Porte accepts their proposals, give a renewed guarantee of the integrity of the Ottoman possessions in Europe; but he fears that discussion which you suggest will entail a delay which it is of utmost importance to avoid if peace is to be preserved.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Berlin (as No. 245); to Constantinople (as No. 733); to St. Petersburg (as No. 988); to Vienna (as No. 240); to Rome (as No. 323). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 733, No. 780.]

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 41891/33672/12/44.

(No. 428.)

Paris, D. October 6, 1912.

Sir,

R. October 7, 1912.

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report of an interview with Monsieur Sazonoff, published in the “Temps” of to-day’s date, on the subject of the crisis in the Balkans.⁽¹⁾

His Excellency declared that “L’Europe s’est retrouvée” in the need for collective action in this emergency. The formula submitted for the approval of the Powers as the basis of this action represented the maximum of precision in a text necessarily drawn up in general terms, but the essential words were there. It was not a question simply of a promise of reforms but of their “realization,” and the practical means for attaining this end. As the Balkan States repudiated territorial expansion, they ought logically to be satisfied. Monsieur Poincaré and he had together received the Bulgarian, Greek and Servian Ministers in Paris and had formally explained their point of view to these Representatives. Russia was ready to adopt either alternative proposed, viz: action in common with the other Powers, or Austro-Russian action in the name of the other Powers. Russia had no “arrière-pensées,” nor had the other Powers. Events had shown that the Franco-Russian alliance and the Triple-Entente were entirely prepared to assume the pacific rôle

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

with a view to which they were constituted, and that the Triple Alliance was giving them useful assistance.

I also transmit to you herewith, an extract from the "Figaro" of to-day's date containing the account of an interview granted by Monsieur Sazonoff to Monsieur Recouly, Foreign Editor of that paper.⁽²⁾ His Excellency suggested that recourse might be had to Article XXIII of the Berlin Treaty for the elements of the programme of reforms, and he mentioned also the solution found in the case of the Lebanon as being possibly a useful guide for the same purpose.

The "Liberté" and the "Matin" also publish interviews with Monsieur Sazonoff.

The French Press emphasize the activity of the French Government in dealing with the Balkan question. The "Temps" observes that if an agreement is established between the Powers, the French Government will be chiefly to thank for bringing it about.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

(²) [Not reproduced]

No. 788.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O 42078/33672/12/44.

(No. 430.) Confidential.

Sir,

Paris, D. October 6, 1912.

R. October 8, 1912.

Monsieur Sazonow was dining with the Russian Ambassador yesterday at the Hotel where I am staying and he expressed the desire to have some conversation with me the next day. He called on me for the purpose this afternoon. His Excellency showed to me the Franco-Russian formula for an endeavour to avert a war in the Balkans, and asked me to telegraph to you to urge that you would accept it as it stood. On a cursory examination of the text of the formula, I noticed words to which I thought that you would take exception, viz:—that the Powers "prendront en main . . . la réalisation des réformes." I told Monsieur Sazonow that I thought that you would consider "prendront en main" too strong a term, and as committing the Powers to action.⁽¹⁾ His Excellency said that Sir Arthur Nicolson had pointed this out to the French Ambassador, but "prendront en main" merely meant that the Powers would take the initiative, and was for the purpose of giving to the Balkan States some confidence that reforms would really be instituted. He did not feel at all sure that the formula as it stood would prevent Bulgaria from going to war, but he felt convinced that it would be the only chance of doing so. The Balkan peoples had learnt by sad experience that Turkish promises were quite unreliable. "Prendront en main" would be a sort of guarantee by the Powers in lieu of those promises. If there were not some such guarantee, it would be impossible to restrain the Bulgarians from taking advantage of their superior preparedness over the Turks for war.

Monsieur Sazonow requested me to give you these explanations and to beg you most earnestly on his part to adopt the Franco-Russian formula which he informed me had been accepted by the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments. His Excellency expressed himself as confident that the Turkish Government would not make objection to it.

(¹) [*cp. immediately succeeding document.*]

Monsieur Sazonow throughout the conversation referred to Bulgaria as the great actor in the situation and as being difficult if not quite impossible to restrain. He spoke of Servia and Greece as not very anxious to fight provided that some sort of plausible means were found by the Powers for extricating them from their present position of difficulty.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

No. 789.

Sir Eduard Grey to Mr. Russell.

F.O. 41811/38672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 243.)

Foreign Office, October 7, 1912, 8 P.M.

I have pointed out to Austrian Chargé d'Affaires objection to phrase "prendront en mains" in communication to Balkan States but have said that I am so anxious to see Austria and Russia in agreement that I waived all criticisms and agreed to the formula proposed.⁽¹⁾

(¹) [*cp. infra*, pp. 741-2, No. 794.]

No. 790.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Eduard Grey.⁽¹⁾

Paris, October 7, 1912.

F.O. 42068/38672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 155.)

D. 8.40 P.M.

R. 10.15 P.M.

Balkans.

Your telegram No. 510, Urgent, of yesterday.⁽²⁾

I have seen French Minister for Foreign Affairs this afternoon. The final paragraph subsequent to No. 3 of the Franco-Russian formula was not intended to form part of communication to be made to Balkan States by Russia and Austria. His Excellency, having ascertained by a telephonic communication with the French Ambassador in London that you were not at all likely to waive your objection to collective action at the Porte, has, with the concurrence of Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, struck out the word "collectivement" from the final paragraph above referred to.

I had communicated to French Minister for Foreign Affairs last night (see my telegram No. 153 of yesterday)⁽³⁾ your suggested wording of communication to be made to Porte (see your telegram No. 508 of 6th October),⁽⁴⁾ and I informed him this afternoon of the contents of your telegram No. 510, Urgent,⁽²⁾ of last night. His Excellency says that communication made to-day to the French Government by the Turkish Government, and, he concludes, also to the Powers, of their intention to carry out article 23 of Berlin Treaty and the Ottoman Law of 1880 on reforms will render it easy for the Powers to take note of these assurances in the identic

(¹) [This telegram was sent to Belgrade (as No. 49); to Berlin (as No. 251); to Bucharest (as No. 31); to Cettinje (as No. 102); to Constantinople (as No. 739); to Rome (as No. 380); to St. Petersburg (as No. 985); to Sofia (as No. 97); to Vienna (as No. 245). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 734, No. 781.]

(³) [*v. supra*, p. 737, No. 786.]

(⁴) [*v. supra*, p. 733, No. 780.]

communications to be made by them to the Porte, and to request an immediate discussion of reforms.

French Minister for Foreign Affairs has no objection personally to your suggestion that if Turkey makes reforms effective Powers should guarantee anew integrity of her possessions in Europe.

No. 791.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 41742/38672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 734.) Urgent.

Foreign Office, October 7, 1912.

My telegram No. 508 to Sir F. Bertie, repeated to you in my telegram No. 722.⁽²⁾

French M[inister of] F[oreign] A[ffairs] is proposing to Powers that communication at Constantinople should be in terms of second paragraph of the above telegram beginning "We suggest" down to "Empire Ottoman" and should be collective and not identic. You are authorized to join in a collective communication in the above terms when your colleagues are ready.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was repeated to Berlin (No. 246); to Paris (No. 520), to St. Petersburg (No. 990); to Vienna (No. 241); to Rome (No. 324).]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 733, No. 780, and note ⁽¹⁾.]

No. 792.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 42197/38672/12/44.

St. Petersburg, D. October 7, 1912.

Tel. (No. 855.)

R. October 8, 1912.

Your telegram No. 510 to Paris.⁽²⁾

Acting M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] said that M. Sazonof would no doubt have been informed of its contents before he left Paris but personally he feared that time would not admit of discussing proposed modifications with Powers.

H[is] E[xc]ellency apparently takes very pessimistic view of the situation. He thinks that though promised application of law of 1880 would have satisfied Balkan States a few months ago it will not do so now that they have mobilised unless it is considerably revised and unless it is supplemented by provisions of a more decentralising character. He tells me that Bulgarian Minister, who is leaving in a few days to join Bulgarian army, considers war almost inevitable. Public opinion here takes same view.

H[is] E[xc]ellency expressed regret at polemical campaign carried on between Austrian and Russian press and said he had approached Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernment] on the subject but that it was very difficult to induce press to moderate its language. On my asking whether he still believed Austria would occupy Sandjak H[is] E[xc]ellency said that both Gov[ernments] were agreed in principle to localise war but that Austria had not so far taken any positive engagement. He did not think that she would move at once (?) when war broke out but she would almost certainly do so later on. She would find a pretext for doing so in some frontier incident or if Servians or Bulgarians were to attempt to set up military

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Vienna (as No. 248); to Sofia (as No. 101); to Belgrade (as No. 52). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 734, No. 781.]

administration of their own in any portion of Turkish territory which they might occupy during war. On my suggesting that two Gov[ernmen]ts might give each other definite engagement that neither would intervene H[is] E[xc]ellency said it was a delicate matter to ask for such an engagement and that Austria might think her position at end of war would be stronger were she already in occupation of Sandjak or Belgrade.

H[is] E[xc]ellency rather fears that Balkan States will present ultimatum to Turkey in the course of three or four days and nothing can then stop war.

No. 793.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 42458/33672/12/44.

(No. 70.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 7, 1912.

In talking to the Austrian Chargé d'Affaires to-day, I took the opportunity of telling him that, during the whole of my conversations with M. Sazonoff, he had never once mentioned the Straits or any alteration or advantage to be obtained for Russia in the Balkans. He was entirely concentrated upon how peace could be preserved and the "status quo" saved from disturbance.

The Chargé d'Affaires said that he was sure that the desire of his Government was the same as that of M. Sazonoff.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this despatch were sent to the Admiralty and to the Director of Military Operations.]

No. 794.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 42305/33672/12/44.

(No. 250.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 7, 1912.

I told the German Chargé d'Affaires to-day that we had on Saturday morning received the first definite proposal from M. Poincaré about the Balkan trouble.⁽²⁾ I heard that Count Berchtold had replied that this proposal would take time for consideration. We had felt the same but had replied accepting it generally on Sunday morning. At six o'clock on Sunday evening M. Cambon had communicated to me another proposal from Monsieur Poincaré superseding the former one⁽³⁾ and made in consequence of suggestions from Count Berchtold. I showed the German Chargé d'Affaires the text of this and said that I had made some verbal criticisms on it but had waived them,⁽⁴⁾ on the understanding that Russia and Austria are both

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 733, *Ed. note.*]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 734, No. 781.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 739, No. 789.]

agreed, from my great desire to promote that agreement. I had therefore agreed to the communication to the Balkan States as agreed to by Russia and Austria.

The question of the communication to Constantinople was left vague. I had expressed the hope that the Ambassadors at Constantinople in informing the Porte of the communication made to the Balkan States would be instructed to say that the realisation of reforms depended upon the Balkan States refraining from a breach of the peace and that the Powers hoped that Turkey would on this condition enter at once upon a discussion of reforms with the Powers.

I had instructed Sir Gerard Lowther to act in this sense at Constantinople when his colleagues were similarly instructed.⁽⁵⁾ I felt that whilst securing the substance of reforms we ought to make it as easy as possible for Turkey to accept the proposal of the Powers and I thought this could be done by making it clear that if Turkey accepted the proposal about reforms she would get the *quid pro quo* in return and be in peaceful possession of her European provinces.

The German Chargé d'Affaires had not yet heard Monsieur Poincaré's last proposal. He had little doubt that his Government, which desired an agreement between Russia and Austria, would accept it and he promised to let me know when this had been done.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

(⁵) [*v. supra*, p 740, No. 791.]

No. 795.

Sir R. Paget to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 42921/38672/12/44.

(No. 62.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. October 7, 1912.

R. October 14, 1912.

Since last reporting on the situation in Serbia in my despatch No. 60 of the 26th ultimo⁽²⁾ a very pronounced change for the worse in the direction of war has set in and has developed with so much rapidity that whilst little more than a week ago there seemed quite a reasonable prospect for a peaceful solution of the tension which had arisen between the Balkan States and Turkey there is now scarcely any other prospect than that of war at any moment.

At noon on the 30th September the order for general mobilization was signed by King Peter. The grounds alleged by the Servian Government for mobilization are that Turkey was Mobilizing and that the Porte refused to deliver the Servian war material stopped in transit through Turkey, but the truth is that Serbia has mobilized in sympathy with Bulgaria and in obedience to orders received from Sofia. Whether the blame for first commencing mobilization lies with Turkey or with Bulgaria or Serbia is difficult to decide. The Bulgarian and Servian Governments maintain that they became aware of the massing of Turkish troops near their frontiers and that these operations had become a direct menace to their safety which forced them to mobilize in all haste whilst on the other hand the Turkish Authorities maintain with equal decision that these movements were merely preparatory to manoeuvres. The point however, is now no longer of particular importance except in so far as its elucidation might help to determine whether the present crisis is in effect due to chance or to a preconceived plan on the part of Bulgarian and Servian Governments.

In previous despatches I have represented on more than one occasion Serbia's attitude as being that she would not move except Bulgaria moved, that she was endeavouring to exercise a restraining influence at Sofia and that she would so far

(¹) [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations]

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 716, No. 748]

as in her power lay obey the wishes of the Powers more especially those of Russia. This being the case I must admit that until matters took the present sinister turn I was decidedly optimistic and looked upon the agitation in Bulgaria and what little effervescence was apparent here as intended more for the purpose of putting pressure on the Powers than as a real movement backed by an intention to carry it to the end. So far as I am aware most of my Colleagues shared the same opinion and even now that mobilization is in full swing there are those who think that if only Russia and Austria would act whole-heartedly and energetically together the situation might yet be saved. I fear, however, that events have now gone too far for ordinary pressure to be of avail unless of course accompanied by some promise to guarantee reforms by the Porte in accordance with the demands of the four Balkan States—a procedure which would probably necessitate inexpedient action at Constantinople. If Serbia instead of Bulgaria were leader in this movement I should scarcely hesitate to say that even at this late moment diplomatic pressure exercised by the Powers would be effectual, for, although mobilization is proceeding the Government are merely marking time and still maintain the attitude that they are anxious to conform to the wishes of the Powers and not to precipitate a war but they must follow Bulgaria's lead. If the truth were known it is probable Monsieur Pashitch and most of the members of the Government would be found very reverse of grateful to Bulgaria for leading them into this adventure and there have been certain indications which convey the impression that they are looking to the Powers to furnish them with some means to retreat.

Whilst mobilization could not fail to be accompanied by a certain amount of popular excitement nothing has occurred to mark anything in the way of national enthusiasm for the war. The only elements which manifest any real ardour are the army officers, the students, the Government employes and their class. It is by these that the few demonstrations such as they have been were organized. The reserves although responding to the call to arms obediently enough seem to do so with apathy, certainly without cheerfulness and it is becoming evident that the bulk of the population is the reverse of carried away by enthusiasm for the war. I hear the troops are already undergoing considerable suffering owing to bad weather, want of tents and insufficient transport and provisions. This will certainly not tend to raise their spirits. It is, moreover, remarkable that many among the better educate[d] Servians hold the opinion that what with the danger threatening from Austria and of being beaten by Turkey Serbia is marching to disaster.

It may appear strange that under circumstances such as these the Servian Government should have allowed matters to go so far, I therefore venture to submit an explanation as briefly as possible.

It is now universally accepted that a Treaty of alliance was concluded, probably last spring, between Bulgaria and Serbia and seeing that Bulgaria had more than once resisted overtures from Serbia for such a Treaty everything points to the probability that its conclusion in the present instance was due to the insistence of Monsieur Spalaikovitch, the Servian Minister at Sophia backed by the influence of Monsieur de Hartwig the Russian Minister at Belgrade. In July last Monsieur Milovanovitch the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs died and was succeeded by Monsieur Yovanovitch who was not at all equal to the responsibilities of his position. Monsieur Spalaikovitch who is a hot-head and a great chauvinist (he was responsible for much of the trouble between Austria and Serbia) but neither far-seeing nor dependable here saw his opportunity. When the Kotchana massacre occurred he found Monsieur Yovanovitch, who besides being weak is very anti-Turkish, a willing listener to his ideas for joint action between the Balkan States. Count Berchtold's proposal and the alleged Sienitza massacre⁽³⁾ afforded Monsieur Spalaikovitch still

(³) [The alleged massacre at Sienitza was reported by Sir R. Paget in his telegram (No. 3) of August 26 (F.O. 36085/36085/12/44), but the report was not confirmed and seemed to have been grossly exaggerated. (F.O. 36356/36085/12/44).]

further opportunities of insisting on the necessity for acting in combination and he succeeded gradually in leading Monsieur Yovanovitch into a position from which he could not retire. When Monsieur Pashitch came into office about a month ago the harm was already done and he found Serbia bound to follow Bulgaria no matter where she might lead. I have no hesitation in saying that had Monsieur Milovanovitch lived he would, though bound to Bulgaria by Treaty, never have permitted Serbia to be forced into her present position and consequently this crisis would never have arisen since Serbia has no real quarrel with Turkey and the outcry about massacres &c. is merely an attempt at justification.

The part played by Monsieur de Hartwig in promoting the Serbo-Bulgarian alliance and the attitude he has adopted ever since his arrival here some years ago namely, that Russia would never desert Serbia no matter in what circumstances has naturally placed him in an impossible position now when instructed from St. Petersburg to use very determined language to the Servian Government in order to discourage them from following Bulgaria. I regret to say that I have strong reason to suspect that Monsieur de Hartwig instead of honestly making the best of an awkward situation has overcome the difficulty by Officially carrying out his instructions whilst at the same time privately letting it be known that Russia never would and never could abandon the Balkan States and that they need have no fear. It would, as is no doubt well known, not be the first time Monsieur de Hartwig has acted in this manner during his diplomatic career. I am referring to his policy in Persia. Servians declare openly that Monsieur de Hartwig is encouraging the war and my French Colleague and I noticed that when together with the other representatives we were instructed to make representations against mobilization and movements of troops Monsieur de Hartwig seemed by no means best pleased with the idea of the *démarche*.

These circumstances as also the fact that there has seemed to be no real whole-hearted co-operation between Austria and Russia have produced an impression in Serbia and doubtless also in Sofia that the Powers are not united and that the Balkan States may profit by this disunion. The effect of representations by the Powers which usually impress public opinion in these countries has consequently been much discounted. Monsieur Pashitch himself sees the danger ahead and he would I think, be glad enough to listen and act up to the pacific advice but as things are going at present the situation is likely to get beyond his control and he is moreover hopelessly in tow of Bulgaria where it looks as though nothing could arrest the current towards war. At the same time it seems incredible that if the Powers by some united *démarche*(⁴) could only cause the Bulgarian and Servian people to fully grasp the fact that they will not be permitted to expand territorially and that consequently besides the chances of defeat they have but little hope of any benefit they would still persist in forcing their Governments to war. Unfortunately they are at present still convinced that notwithstanding all assertions to the contrary they will succeed in retaining what they conquer.

For the sake of brevity I annex to this despatch some items of information in the form of disconnected statements.(⁵)

I have, &c.

RALPH PAGET.

(⁴) [Marginal comment by Mr. Villiers (unsigned): "The Balkan States have been told this."]

(⁵) [Not reproduced.]

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Vienna, October 8, 1912.

F.O. 42221/33672/12/44.

D. 12.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 97.)

R. 3 P.M.

I have seen Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] early this morning and I enquired of him when the French formula would be communicated to the four Balkan States. He replied that he had telegraphed last night to the four Austro-Hungarian representatives in the four capitals to concert with their Russian colleague as to its communication. Up to last night Russian Embassy here had no information as to similar instructions having been sent to Russian representatives but the Russian Ambassador left yesterday afternoon for Berlin to see Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] and will probably obtain from the latter that instructions be sent without loss of time.

On my enquiring of Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] whether he thought French formula will satisfy Balkan States and lead to demobilisation he shook his head. For him the trouble is that Bulgaria will demand precise interpretation of term "prendre en mains" of the French formula which like yourself he told me he only reluctantly accepted in order to save time.⁽²⁾ Bulgaria will certainly want to know whether Europe will limit her action to persuading Turkey to introduce reforms or whether she undertakes the duty of seeing them carried out.

Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] said to me that so far instructions have been sent to the Austro-Hungarian representatives merely to communicate text of French formula to the Balkan states, taking it for granted that they will reply to it without loss of time.

I pointed out to him that it was probable that Balkan States would have to exchange views with each other before giving a common reply and that we should probably reach the end of the week before that reply is received. His Excellency thought that this was probable but that it would be difficult for the Powers to take action at Constantinople before they had the promise of the Balkan States to demobilise if Turkey gave a satisfactory reply with regard to execution of reforms.

Confidential.

Bulgarian Minister spoke to me most earnestly last night with regard to present crisis. He was very depressed and told me in his opinion Bulgaria must take a definite decision by Monday next when mobilisation will be complete. He assured me most solemnly that King and leading Ministers would be assassinated if they gave the order for demobilisation before satisfactory European guarantees are obtained for the execution of Macedonian reforms. I may sum up his views thus: "Bulgaria demands minimum reforms—a few essential ones—but maximum European guarantees for their execution." I reported this to the M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] this morning, and asked him if I could inform you if he was optimistic or pessimistic as to the situation. He replied "I tell you privately I am pessimistic, but officially to the world I must appear optimistic."

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 789, No. 789.]

No. 797.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Vienna, October 8, 1912.

D. 12.30 P.M.

R. 5 P.M.

F.O. 42223/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 98.) Confidential.

My immediately preceding telegram (of to-day).⁽²⁾

In conversation with me this morning Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] observed that in the present serious aspect of Balkan crisis it would be well if England used her influence at Constantinople to persuade Porte that it was really in their interest to yield on the question of some kind of European supervision of the execution of the proposed Macedonian reforms. Could not the Porte be persuaded to take the initiative in inviting the Powers to exercise a kind of European supervision of the faithful carrying out of the proposed reforms? After Crimean War and Berlin treaty, he said, Turkey had agreed to various degrees of supervision. European supervision would therefore be nothing new for Turkey.

MINUTE.

We cannot possibly act alone in this matter—and the moment is hardly one in which to impose fresh demands on Turkey.

[A. N.]

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this telegram was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 798.

Sir F. Elliot to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Athens, October 8, 1912.

D. 5 P.M.

R. 9 P.M.

F.O. 42230/33672/12/44.

Tel. (No. 54.) Confidential.

I have seen Prime Minister (?) and asked him whether tension had been relieved by offer of Turkey to apply reforms proposed by the Commission of 1880. He said that those reforms were now out of date; moreover, he was intensely disappointed that the Powers had not yet realised that there is no practical difference between the old and the new régimes in Turkey, and that to ensure good administration it is essential to have European valis and gendarmerie under European officers. Misgovernment in Turkey was a matter of inconvenience to the Powers, but was a matter of life and death to the allied Balkan States, who must put an end to it if the Great Powers would not. I asked him whether *amour-propre* of Turkish Government would allow them to yield to demands of the Balkan States, what the Great Powers had not been able to obtain, and whether desire for reforms was the real motive for the action of the States. To the first question he replied that if Turkish *amour-propre* was to stand in the way of a peaceful solution, so much the worse: to the second, that the Balkan States had really no ulterior object in view than the attainment of reforms in Turkey. Greece had of course Cretan question also in which a *modus vivendi* must be found, but that was for the moment a secondary matter.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram was sent to Paris (as No. 533); to Berlin (as No. 257); to St. Petersburg (as No. 1009); to Constantinople (as No. 746); to Vienna (as No. 253); to Belgrade (as No. 54); to Bucharest (as No. 36); to Rome (as No. 386); to Sofia (as No. 104); to Cetinje (as No. 106). A copy was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

I asked if he were free from apprehension of embarrassment on the part of Cretan deputies at opening of Chamber, and he said he was not.

Alluding to his use of the term "allied States," I asked if he had used it in its strict sense, but he would do no more than point to recent events to justify his use of it.

Impression I derived was that he expects war: most hopeful symptom is the evident disinclination of all parties to be responsible for declaring it. The worst is that Greek Government are confident that the four states will be stronger than Turkey at least at first.

Austro-Hungarian and Russian Ministers have been instructed to make to Greek Government in the (group undecypherable) all the more (group undecypherable)⁽²⁾ strong representation against disturbing the peace. They are to state that the Powers will themselves undertake to see that reforms are carried out under article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin. (Two groups undecypherable) States,⁽³⁾ but the latter will not forget how long fulfillment of this obligation has already been delayed.

⁽²⁾ [In the paraphrase of the telegram this was inserted as "in the name of all the Great Powers."]

⁽³⁾ [In the paraphrase this was inserted as "In principle this ought to render the demands of the Balkan States superfluous."]

No. 799.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 42223/33672/12/14.

Foreign Office, October 8, 1912.

Tel. (No. 249.)

D. 11.45 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 98.⁽¹⁾

If other Balkan States are going to make Montenegrin declaration of war a reason for doing the same no diplomatic action will be of any avail at the moment, but in any case Turkey could not be pressed to yield to European supervision without some guarantee that European Powers would guarantee to her peaceful possession of her provinces.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 746, No. 797.]

No. 800.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 42147/33672/12/44.

(No. 496.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 9, 1912.

M. Cambon came to see Sir A. Nicolson on Oct[ober] 4.⁽¹⁾ H[is] E[xc]ellency said that M. Poincaré was anxious to hear whether I approved of Austria and Russia

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 732, No. 778, note ⁽³⁾. The account of the interview given above is based on a minute by Sir A. Nicolson sent to Sir Edward Grey on the same day. Attached to it was a request from Sir A. Nicolson that Sir Edward Grey would telegraph an answer to the following points:—

"1. If asked shall I say that you agree to Austria and Russia presenting note to Turkey in name of all Powers? or

2. Shall I say that you would prefer that the note should be collective and signed by all the Powers? or

Is there any other course you would wish taken?"

Sir Edward Grey noted on the paper "I have telegraphed that I agree to No. 2. E. G. 5.10.12."

being entrusted with a mandate to deal with the existing crisis and to endeavour to avert a conflict. Sir A. Nicolson asked M. Cambon whether such a mandate was to cover action or language at Constantinople as well as at the Balkan capitals. M. Cambon said he presumed that it was. Sir A. Nicolson observed that, speaking personally, he saw a great distinction between authorising the two Powers to speak or act on our behalf at the Balkan capitals, and conferring on them the same authority to take similar measures at Constantinople. As regards the Balkans, Austria and Russia were more directly interested than other Powers perhaps, and Balkan interests were, in a sense, circumscribed and limited within a well-defined area. It would be quite another matter to empower two Powers to take similar steps with Turkey, which was in a sense a world Power, and whose influence stretched throughout the Moslem world. Our interests were as great as, probably greater, than those of any other Power at Constantinople, and personally Sir A. Nicolson would deprecate two Powers being given a blank cheque to speak at Stamboul in our name. Sir A. Nicolson said that I would have no objection to Austria and Russia taking, in the name of Europe, steps at the Balkan Capitals with a view of keeping the peace; but that as regards steps at Constantinople Sir A. Nicolson must make reserves and consult me on the subject.

M. Cambon said that M. Poincaré was most desirous that I should agree to Point 4 of his original proposals.⁽²⁾ M. Sazonow, although at Balmoral he had agreed with me in declining it, appeared to be now in its favour. Sir A. Nicolson told M. Cambon he would refer M. Poincaré's request to me, but that he doubted if I would be inclined to alter my opinion, as the moment was hardly opportune; and moreover the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t had asserted publicly that they had every intention of putting reforms into execution. If the Balkan States demobilized the position would be different, but Sir A. Nicolson was afraid any advice or pressure at Constantinople at this moment would be curtly rejected and resisted. The Turkish Gov[ernmen]t were well aware of our wishes as to reforms, and only two days ago Sir A. Nicolson had spoken to Tewfik P[ash]a on the subject. H[is] H[ighness] had said that in view of Balkan menaces no Turkish Gov[ernmen]t could go farther than they had already done.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

(²) [*v. supra*, pp. 702-3, No. 734, and *encl.* Sir A. Nicolson noted with reference to this Point 4 "This has really be[en] quite superseded by the steps now about to be proposed and we need not further consider it. A. N. Oct. 4/12."]

[*ED. NOTE*—The joint representation to the four Balkan States was made by the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Ministers on October 8. *cp. O.-U.A.*, IV, p. 573, Nos. 3992-3; p. 576, No. 3997, p. 584, No. 4009. Further reference to this subject will be made in Volume IX (Part II).]

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

VISIT OF M. SAZONOV TO ENGLAND.

[*ED. NOTE.*—M. Sazonov arrived in London on September 20, remaining there until the night of September 23 when he travelled to Balmoral, arriving on the afternoon of the 24th. Sir Edward Grey reached Balmoral on September 24, and Mr. Bonar Law on the 26th. M. Sazonov left Balmoral on September 27, visited Lord Crewe at Crewe Hall, Cheshire, and returned to London on the 29th. He left England for Paris on October 2. For M. Sazonov's report to the Czar, *v. Livre Noir*, II, pp. 345-59, *r.* also *Siebert*, pp. 356-70.]

No. 801.

M. Sazonov to Count Benckendorff.

Tel. Private.⁽¹⁾

Finlande, July 23, 1912.

L'Empereur ayant daigné approuver mon projet de visite en Angleterre, Vous prie de faire parvenir au Roi l'expression de ma respectueuse reconnaissance pour Sa gracieuse invitation à Balmoral, où je me ferai un devoir d'arriver le jour que Sa Majesté voudra indiquer entre le 20 et le 30 Septembre.

(1) [Grey MSS., Vol. 35.]

No. 802.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Buchanan.

London, July 27, 1912.

I am delighted that Sazonoff is going to Balmoral on September 28rd, and that I am to meet him there.

I look forward to my talks with him, and I propose to discuss every thing he wishes in the frankest possible way.

If you have an opportunity I shall be glad if you will tell him this in the most cordial terms. . . .⁽²⁾

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

(1) [Grey MSS., Vol. 35.]

(2) [The rest of the letter deals with Persia.]

[*ED. NOTE.*—The following record of the conversations at Balmoral was prepared as a memorandum for the use of the Cabinet and was printed on October 5. This printed text is the only one available. The Cabinet paper contained also the note of M. Sazonov's conversation with Lord Crewe at Crewe Hall which is printed *infra*, pp. 759–61, No. 804.]

No. 803.

Conversations between M. Sazonov and Sir Edward Grey at Balmoral on Tuesday, September 24, and following days.

F.O. 41779/40809/12/44.

Persia.

(1.)

The conversations began with a reference to Persia.⁽¹⁾

M. Sazonow said that he thought that Russia ought to have a more free hand, without being questioned, in the north.

He was quite opposed to any idea of the partition of Persia.

He had observed the incident of a man at the station when he arrived,⁽²⁾ and he said that British public opinion seemed to be very sensitive about Persia.

I said there was a section of public opinion on the Liberal side, a minority, which was quite unreasonable, and had only discovered Persia, or at any rate given its attention to Persia, within the last few years, and took no account of what had happened before that. This section of public opinion would never get control of British policy; but there was a large amount of moderate and reasonable opinion that very much disliked the idea of partition, and did feel sensitive about the Russian military occupation of northern Persia.

M. Sazonow said that he and the Russian authorities all wished, for financial reasons amongst others, to withdraw the Russian troops from Persia as soon as it could be done; but such things as the massacre of Russians at Tabriz had very much excited Russian opinion. Russia must be in a position to prevent such things recurring, or the Government would be most severely blamed.

I said I understood this, and that there must be a Government at Tehran on which Russia could rely to see her interests were protected and not prejudiced, and if there was an extension of the Persian Cossacks or Persian gendarmerie under Russian officers, serving under a Persian Government friendly to Russia, the Russian troops might be withdrawn.

M. Sazonow said he would welcome such a solution, but urged that the Central Government at Tehran must be strengthened by having a strong head.

He realised that it would be difficult for us to agree to the return of the ex-Shah after all we had said.

This I confirmed, and M. Sazonow thought that in any case the ex-Shah was a bad ruler, and though there might be something to be said for a strong tyrant, there was nothing to be said for a weak one.

We then discussed the Nasr-ul-Mulk.

I said he seemed to be the only honest man in Persia, but I feared, from all I had heard, he had become quite useless as Regent, owing to his weakness.

M. Sazonow was also of this opinion, and proposed the Saad-ed-Dowleh.

I made some criticisms on his character.

M. Sazonow said no doubt he was not perfect, but had not been an anti-constitutionalist, and ought, therefore, not to be objectionable to British public opinion.

⁽¹⁾ [The question of Persia will be treated in a later volume.]

⁽²⁾ [*op The Times*, September 21, 1912.]

I said that in default of anyone better, realising that the Central Government must be strengthened, I would agree to this change of Regent, but if there was a Regent on whom Russia could rely for protection of her interests in the north, the Regent must see, and the governors appointed under him must ensure, that our interests, strategic in the south-east of Persia and commercial in the whole of the south, were protected.

I suggested that if, as I feared, the Swedish officers were ineffective, there should be Persian road guards, under British officers lent for the purpose, in the neutral zone.

M. Sazonow saw difficulties about this. He said it would appear to Russian opinion as if Russia had made us the concession of the whole of the neutral zone without any return.

I urged that to lend British officers to a Persian Government solely for the protection of the roads on which our trade depended was a natural step in our trade interests, and did not amount to treating the neutral zone as a British sphere.

Moreover, it must be remembered that when Russia had 12,000 or 15,000 troops in the north, or if she had a great extension of Persian Cossacks or gendarmerie under Russian officers in the north, so that the whole district, in which the capital of Persia was, became obviously under Russian influence, it was an ample set-off against British officers for trade routes in the south, of which British trade had much the largest share.

I referred to the presence of Russian troops at Meshed and Kushan and the bombardment of the shrine.

This was liable to affect Afghan opinion adversely, and the bombardment had really shocked Mussulman opinion.

I brought this as an instance of what I had previously said, that while we desired not to stand in Russia's way anywhere and to support her when we could, it was essential that we should not be brought into any position that would offend Mussulman opinion or feeling.

M. Sazonow said there was no thought of a permanent occupation of Meshed by troops; they would be withdrawn as soon as possible, and he regretted the bombardment of the shrine.

F. G.

September 24, 1912.

(2.)

I recurred to the subject of Persia with M. Sazonow to-day, and pointed out on the map how large the Russian sphere was as compared with the British.

What people here felt was that the changes since the Anglo-Russian Convention had been to our disadvantage. Russia was now in military occupation of some portions of northern Persia; her shadow was thereby thrown right across the north, that inevitably made her influence predominant at Tehran, and ours correspondingly less; and all this made it more than ever essential that we should be quite sure as regards the rest of Persia, and especially with regard to our commercial interests in the neutral zone; that Persian governors should be supported by the Central Government in protecting these interests; and that the Russian Minister at Tehran should never work against them. As long as M. Poklewski was there we were sure this would be safe.

M. Sazonow said that whatever Russian Minister was there, his instructions would always be the same, to act as M. Poklewski had done in this respect.

I then recurred to the possibility of road guards under British officers as a compensating security for our trade in the neutral zone.

M. Sazonow said he had been thinking this over, and felt we must not quarrel about it. It could be arranged reciprocally as a matter of form, though Russia

would probably not want to exercise it. They wished to have the same facilities for protecting their trade if it were required, as we obtained for ourselves, in the neutral zone; that would be protection, not more than, but only to the same extent, on a Russian trade route, such as that from Ispahan to Kerman, as we secured on our trade routes.

I told M. Sazonow I had sent the papers he had given me to London, and I should like to conclude our discussion on Friday by defining some of the points we had raised, and settling with him what I should give in Parliament⁽³⁾ as the result of our discussions.

E. G.

September 25, 1912.

(3.)

General Résumé.

Both desire to avoid partition or military occupation of Persia. It is the desire and intention of Russia to withdraw her troops from places now occupied in the north of Persia as soon as situation admits.

To secure these objects restoration of order is essential.

For this a stronger Central Government is required. Return of ex-Shah is not the solution—he is a weak governor, and Great Britain cannot recognise him. Weakness of present Regent is admitted, and it is improbable that he could be induced to return. A stronger man must be found. M. Sazonow suggests the Saad-ed-Dowleh. It is admitted that he is not perfect, but I agree, as I am unable to suggest anyone more likely to succeed.

I have, however, suggested—

1. That the Saad-ed-Dowleh should agree not to interfere with honest and effective control of finances.
2. That if so, he should be assured of moral support of both Governments and their agents throughout Persia to him and his governors. I have quoted embarrassment of Sipahdar at Tabriz as an instance of what must be avoided. Saad-ed-Dowleh may, of course, change some governors.
3. We should not interfere as regards appointments of governors in Russian sphere, nor they in British. If diplomatic influence is used as regards appointment of any governor in neutral zone it will be only in concert with us. All governors to be instructed and encouraged to devote special attention to security of trade routes.
4. It would probably give new Regent a good start if he would announce that a Medjliss (we did not specify how elected) and a Senate would be established according to the Constitution. M. Sazonow does not object to this, but thinks that Saad-ed-Dowleh should first be consulted, and I have agreed and M. Sazonow agrees to all the above suggestions.

We agree that money is the great essential and a great difficulty, and that a loan is to be promoted and encouraged. M. Sazonow will consult financiers in Paris.

He agrees that we should promise and do our best to secure any conditions such as a stronger personnel for Treasury control, a "Caisse de la Dette," method of collecting "malat," diplomatic support for which financiers ask, and that they should be invited to suggest any conditions that would satisfy them without imposing pecuniary liability on British and Russian Governments.

I foresee that financiers may say that they will not lend without a European guarantee until order is secured in Persia. We shall then be in this dilemma: that

⁽³⁾ [An official communication was made to the Press (*v. Carnock MSS.*, Vol. VI of 1912) on September 30, and was afterwards quoted in the House of Commons. *v. The Times*, October 1, 1912, p. 8. *Parl. Deb.*, 5th Ser. (House of Commons), Vol. 42, pp. 328 and 496.]

there can be no money until there is a gendarmerie, and no gendarmerie until there is money. All I can suggest is that British and Russian Governments should then lend money to establish a gendarmerie or efficient force, the money to be repaid when loan is raised.

For this purpose it may be necessary that system of Persian Cossacks under Russian officers should be extended in the north, Russian troops being withdrawn as Cossacks became effective. We should, if need be, have similar arrangement in our sphere, and for trade routes in neutral sphere, Russia having reciprocal privilege as regards Russian trade routes in neutral sphere. Swedish officers would continue to be employed, chiefly no doubt in neutral sphere.

E. G.

(4.)

M. Sazonow has suggested the abolition of the neutral zone in Persia, his object being to avoid railway concessions to a third Power in that zone. I have pointed out that the Russian zone is already so big that it is difficult to increase it, and that an agreement between us to apportion the neutral zone would not bind other Powers. To keep them out of it, agreements would still be necessary with other Powers as Russia had made with Germany about her existing zone. M. Sazonow expressed his apprehension lest Germany should acquire a concession for a railway from Khanikin to Ispahan. I said this might be averted if Russia would get from the Persian Government an option to make the line from Khoremabad to Tehran, and if there were an Anglo-Russian option to make a branch from Khoremabad along the frontier of the neutral and Russian zones to Ispahan. In this way the ground would be occupied. M. Sazonow said this would be a good way out of the difficulty.

E. G.

September 25, 1912.

(5.)

Chemin de Fer transiranien.⁽⁴⁾

(Memorandum communicated by M. Sazonow, September 24, 1912.)

La Société d'Études, constituée en vue de tenter la construction d'un chemin de fer transiranien, a songé dernièrement à l'exécution partielle de ce projet sans attendre qu'une décision définitive soit prise quant à la réalisation du projet. Dans cet ordre d'idées il s'agirait d'entreprendre dès maintenant la construction d'une ligne qui, partant d'Alat sur le Transcaucasien, irait jusqu'à Téhéran et constituerait ainsi une partie du tronçon russe de la grande ligne projetée. En principe, le Gouvernement Impérial serait prêt à admettre une semblable solution.

La Société d'Études a, paraît-il, l'intention d'entamer à cet effet des pourparlers avec le Gouvernement persan tant au sujet des recherches préalables à exécuter sur les lieux que de l'option à obtenir pour les lignes qui l'intéressent. Considérant que, par elle-même, l'option obtenue n'implique pas encore la construction effective des voies visées, le Gouvernement Impérial aime à croire que le Gouvernement britannique ne verra, de son côté, aucune objection à ce que la Société d'Études obtienne l'option en question, car, le cas échéant, ladite société restera libre de ne point user du droit acquis pour ce qui concerne le tronçon anglais du chemin de fer. Le Gouvernement Impérial espère, par conséquent, que rien n'empêchera les représentants britannique et russe à Téhéran d'appuyer, tous les deux, les démarches de la société dans le sens précité.

⁽⁴⁾ [For the memoranda handed to M. Sazonov in reply to this and the subsequent memoranda v. *infra*, pp. 765-9, No. 809, *encl.*]

Afin de faciliter l'heureuse issue de ces démarches, il serait désirable d'encourager la Société d'Études à faire simultanément des offres sérieuses au Gouvernement persan en vue de réaliser le grand emprunt dont il a besoin.

MINUTES.

I have said that I agree it is desirable to occupy the ground by getting an option for the Société d'Études, which will enable us to say when and where a trans-Persian line would be made. We could not object to Russia making a line to Tehran. What we should want constructed as soon as possible would be a line from Mohammerah to Khoremad, and if this could be prolonged by arrangement with Russia into the Russian sphere, it would make the branch from Khanikin to Tehran less important.

I propose finally to tell M. Sazonow that we will support an option as requested for the Société d'Études, subject to all the conditions and reserves already stipulated as to route, &c., outside the Russian sphere, understanding that he will not oppose the Mohammerah-Khoremad line; but I should like to have the observations of the department first.

E. G.

September 24, 1912.

(6.)

Chemins de Fer anglais en Perse

(Memorandum communicated by M. Sazonow, September 24, 1912.)

Un syndicat anglais (Messrs. Greenway, Seligman, Lynch) a présenté au Gouvernement persan un projet de construction d'un réseau de chemins de fer dans le sud de la Perse, projet se résumant en traits généraux aux points suivants :—

1. Émission par la Perse d'obligations garanties par les lignes de chemin de fer elles-mêmes et leurs revenus, ainsi que par les revenus douaniers et autres revenus du Gouvernement persan, au choix du syndicat.
2. Construction des lignes de chemin de fer—
 - (a.) De Mohammerah ou de Khor-Moussa à Khorremabad ou Bouroudjird (ce dernier point situé dans la zone russe).
 - (b.) De Bender-Abbas à Kerman.
 - (c.) „ „ Chiraz.
 - (d.) „ „ Mohammerah.
3. Droit de construire des ports dans chacune des villes maritimes susmentionnées.
4. Option pour la construction de prolongations de ces lignes ou de toutes autres lignes dans le sud de la Perse.

Ce projet entraînerait une augmentation considérable de la dette publique en Perse, ce qui ne manquerait pas d'avoir de graves inconvénients, eu égard aux engagements financiers déjà contractés par ce pays envers la Russie et l'Angleterre. En tout cas, la garantie des obligations par "les revenus douaniers et autres," déjà affectés au service des emprunts antérieurs ou constituant la seule source de revenus susceptibles de garantir le grand emprunt dont il est question en ce moment, soulève de sérieuses objections.

Sans entrer dans les détails du projet mentionné, qui demandent une étude plus approfondie, on ne saurait passer sous silence que l'exploitation de la zone neutre étant également ouverte aux capitaux des deux pays, toute absorption plus ou moins exclusive des chemins de fer dans cette zone serait peu conforme à l'esprit de la convention de 1907. Quant au projet de faire éventuellement aboutir une des lignes à Bouroudjird, ville rentrant dans la zone russe, ce projet serait en contradiction avec les principes mêmes de cette convention.

Il semblerait, par conséquent, fort opportun de soumettre le projet élaboré par le syndicat à un examen préalable de la part des Gouvernements de Grande-Bretagne et de Russie.

MINUTES.

On this point I have replied that the only railway concession of those mentioned for which we are pressing is the Mohammedrah-Khoiemabad line. I recognised that with regard to further railway concessions in the neutral zone we must discuss them with Russia. This would not apply to a railway from Bunder-Abbas to Kerman or any other in the British sphere. To this M. Sazonow agreed. He said that Russian opinion would not like the Mohammedrah-Khoiemabad line, but he recognised that it was essential for our trade, and he would not oppose it.

E. G.

September 24, 1912.

I have told M. Sazonow that the Mohammedrah-Khoiemabad line stands apart from the others in the neutral zone. As regards the others, we might ask Russia at any time later on to consent to them, but we could not claim her consent to them as a matter of right until the trans-Persian Railway proceeded beyond Russian sphere, and then apparently the actual condition was some international basis.

E. G.

September 27, 1912.

(7.)

M. Sazonow has hardly mentioned the Lynch affairs. I explained the Bagdad Railway Transport contract to him, and he acquiesced without demur in the explanation.

As regards the road concession in northern Persia, I said that it was an extension of an existing concession, and that Russia had said she did not object. This he admitted. I said no concession would be asked for to run motors on the road, but it was contended that, there being no restriction, any wheeled traffic could use the road. M. Sazonow said this was a point to be discussed, and I said no more.

It is clear that the point must be discussed on this ground, and no motor concession must be asked for.

E. G.

September 27, 1912.

(8.)

Question frontière entre la Turquie et la Perse.

(Memorandum communicated by M. Sazonow, September 24, 1912.)

Les travaux de la commission turco-persane à Constantinople n'ayant abouti jusqu'ici à aucun résultat par suite de l'attitude intransigeante des délégués turcs, il y a tout lieu de croire que la Turquie est décidée de porter le litige par-devant le tribunal de La Haye. Cette éventualité ne serait aucunement désirable au point de vue de la Russie et de l'Angleterre, intéressées toutes les deux dans le maintien de l'intégrité de la Perse, étant donné que la Turquie n'a pas cessé depuis un grand nombre d'années d'accumuler des preuves en faveur de ses réclamations, preuves d'une authenticité fort douteuse, mais qui pourraient quand même influencer l'opinion de la cour d'arbitrage. D'autre part, quelle que soit la décision de ce tribunal, elle ne manquera pas d'entraver la liberté d'action des Puissances médiatrices.

En conséquence, les démarches nécessaires ont été faites pour obtenir la prolongation des travaux de la commission de Constantinople. Néanmoins, si la Turquie y consentait on pourrait toujours s'attendre à des attermolements continuels de sa part en vue d'aboutir quand même au tribunal de La Haye.

Quelque justifiées que soient les réclamations des deux Puissances, il est plus que probable que les négociations directes qu'elles ont entamées avec la Porte ne pourront être menées à bonne fin qu'en assurant à la Turquie certains avantages ou compensations dont le caractère forme en ce moment l'objet de l'étude de deux Ambassades à Constantinople. Pour le cas où la Porte, malgré ces concessions, se montrerait intraitable, il faudrait s'entendre dès à présent quant aux moyens de pression sur elle que les deux Puissances pourraient employer pour la rendre plus conciliante.

Si la Turquie réussissait à annexer les localités occupées actuellement par elle dans les rayons de Khoy, Salmas, Ourmiah, Souldouz et Soudjboulagh, la Russie se verrait de son côté obligée d'occuper une partie de l'Azerbaidjan, nommément les districts de Makou, Kotour, Khoy, et peut-être même de Maragha, jusqu'au moment où la Perse disposerait de forces armées suffisantes pour défendre ses possessions contre les agressions turques et pour sauvegarder sa neutralité.

MINUTES.

I have replied that I believe the present Turkish Government is disposed to settle, and that I will advise them that on the settlement of this question, which is nominally between Persia and Turkey, depends a great deal of the future relations between Russia and Turkey. M. Sazonow thinks something may be conceded to Turkey in the Zohab Valley, but he cannot concede anything about Lake Urmia.

E. G

September 24, 1912.

Turco-Persian frontier.

The most recent reports from Constantinople are a good deal more satisfactory.

His Majesty's and the Russian representatives have suggested territorial concessions which could be made to Turkey in Zohab, but it is possible that it may not be necessary to make them.

The British vice-consul at Kasri Shirin is to go to Bagdad to study the papers and advise as to the tribal conditions in the districts which may be ceded.

I think nothing more can be done for the present.

H. N.

A. N.

September 25, 1912.

I read this to M. Sazonow, who expressed satisfaction.

E. G

September 27, 1912.

Afghanistan.

(9.)

(Memorandum communicated by M. Sazonow, September 24, 1912.)

Jusqu'à présent l'Émir d'Afghanistan n'a pas reconnu les stipulations de la convention de 1907 qui concernent ses États et qui prévoient l'établissement de relations directes entre les autorités frontalières russes et afghanes.

Cet état de choses présente pour la Russie de nombreux et graves désavantages. Le commerce entre la Russie et l'Afghanistan tend à se développer, ce qui entraîne naturellement un accroissement de questions litigieuses inévitables partout où existent des relations commerciales, quelque limitées qu'elles soient.

Les questions d'irrigation, d'un intérêt vital pour la population indigène, exigent un contrôle continu et vigilant.

Les ravages causés par les sauterelles demandent également des mesures énergiques et concertées afin de préserver les plantations contre ce fléau.

Toutes ces questions ne peuvent être résolues que par une activité commune des autorités russes et afghanes.

En outre, la Russie n'opposant aucune entrave à la libre circulation des sujets afghans sur territoire russe, ces derniers se trouvent dans une position privilégiée en comparaison aux sujets russes auxquels l'accès de l'Afghanistan est interdite. Un pareil état de choses porte préjudice au prestige de la Russie dans l'Asie centrale.

Le Gouvernement Impérial croit devoir attirer l'attention particulière du Gouvernement britannique sur les armements continuels de l'Afghanistan, ainsi que sur la présence dans ce pays d'un grand nombre d'instructeurs militaires turcs dont le chiffre s'élève actuellement à quatre-vingts officiers. En contribuant à l'organisation d'une armée afghane, ces instructeurs s'occupent en même temps de propagande pan-islamique, également dangereuse au point de vue des intérêts anglais et russes.

Gagnant du terrain dans les domaines de l'Émir et excitant le fanatisme des populations afghanes, cette propagande pénètre de plus en plus dans les régions limitrophes de la Russie et des pays qui se trouvent sous son protectorat.

Ce qui précède, semble démontrer suffisamment la nécessité de mettre fin à un état de choses aussi anormal. Le Gouvernement Impérial aime à espérer que le Gouvernement britannique voudra reconnaître le bien-fondé de ses arguments et ne refusera pas son concours en vue d'écarter les inconvénients indiqués.

MINUTES.

I have said that I thought we must urge the Ameer to instruct his officials on the frontier to come to a fair agreement with the Russian officials about irrigation and locusts. This was in accord with article 3 of the Anglo-Russian Convention about Afghanistan,^(*) and though the Ameer might be too suspicious to sign the convention, we could urge him in practice to make reasonable arrangements. I pointed out the danger of Russian subjects being killed if they entered Afghanistan, which I believed was a very lawless country.

I said that the Turkish officers came from chauvinistic influence in Turkey, and were likely to be as anti-British as anti-Russian, and that Constantinople was the place at which to discourage the sending of them

E. G.

September 24, 1912.

I have asked M. Sazonow to discuss this with Lord Crewe. I have said it does not appear to me to be unreasonable to ask that the Ameer's frontier officials should be instructed to arrange such matters as irrigation with the Russian officials according to article 3.

E. G.

September 27, 1912.

Russian Consul at Bombay.

(10.)

Nomination d'un Consul russe à Bombay.

(Memorandum communicated by M. Sazonow, September 21, 1912.)

Le Gouvernement britannique n'a pas donné jusqu'ici son consentement à la nomination d'un représentant consulaire russe à Bombay.

Le Gouvernement britannique exige en échange l'admission d'un représentant consulaire britannique soit à Tachkent, soit à Boukhara.

Au jugement du Gouvernement Impérial, la situation ainsi créée offre l'inconvénient de trop remettre en mémoire la situation qui existait lors de l'antagonisme entre les deux Puissances, si heureusement terminé.

Une impression de ce genre prévaudrait certainement en Russie et pourrait, il faut le craindre, se faire jour aux Indes mêmes.

Le Gouvernement Impérial attache grande valeur à cette considération.

C'est ainsi qu'en demandant la création d'un poste consulaire à Bombay, la Russie ne prétend qu'à un avantage déjà acquis par d'autres Puissances qui ont des consuls à Bombay et même à Madras.

Il n'en est pas de même pour les possessions russes de l'Asie centrale, où non seulement aucun représentant consulaire n'a jamais été admis, mais dont l'accès même n'est permis aux sujets étrangers qu'en vertu d'une autorisation spéciale délivrée pour chaque cas.

L'admission d'un consul anglais entraînerait l'obligation d'y admettre également des consuls des autres Puissances, ce qui constituerait une difficulté considérable pour le Gouvernement Impérial.

(*) [v. Gooch & Temperley, Vol. IV, p. 619, App. I.]

La base de réciprocité s'établit par contre tout naturellement entre le consentement du Gouvernement Impérial à la nomination de représentants consulaires anglais à Krasnoïarsk et Nicolaevsk ainsi qu'à l'élévation du vice-consul d'Angleterre à Vladivostock au rang de consul et celui du consentement du Gouvernement britannique à la nomination d'un consul russe à Bombay.

C'est à ce point de vue que se place le Gouvernement Impérial.

MINUTE.

I have suggested that M. Sazonow should discuss this question with Lord Crewe. I have confined myself to saying that I see the difficulties referred to in the paragraphs marked, (6) but I have said nothing about Bombay.

E. G.

September 24, 1912.

Mongolia.

(11.)

M. Sazonow told me very confidentially that in a very short time the Russian Minister at Peking would go to Urga to negotiate an arrangement with the Khoutouktar and some of the leading Khans under which they were to agree to resist Chinese immigration, administration, or military occupation, and in this Russia would help them if need be. But Russia desired only Mongolian autonomy and not to alter the *status quo*. He said in reply to a question from me this applied to Outer Mongolia. Russia also demanded the prolongation of the treaty of 1881 with China, which gave certain preferential rights for Russian trade and subjects in Outer Mongolia.

E. G.

September 24, 1912.

Thibet

(12.)

I explained to M. Sazonow why a Chinese invasion of Thibet would disturb us by probably causing war between Nepal and the Chinese. We had, I hoped, averted a Chinese invasion by diplomatic representations at Peking, and we hoped Thibetan autonomy under Chinese suzerainty would be preserved. If so we desired nothing except the commercial treaty that we already had with Thibet. But unforeseen trouble might arise that might make it desirable for us to send some agent to Lhasa to keep us informed. I had no proposal to make at the moment, but a contingency might arise in which we should have to ask Russia for some relaxation on our side of the agreement about Thibet. M. Sazonow said he would be ready to listen to this, but he would require some *quid pro quo* for Russia. Mongolia was outside the Anglo-Russian agreement and he could not regard that as in *pari materia* with Thibet. He assured me that Dorjef had no mission from Russia and was in Thibet on his own adventure.

E. G.

September 24, 1912.

Turco-Italian War.

(13.)

M. Sazonow asked about the *Ægean Islands*. He agreed, as a matter of course, in the view that it was undesirable for any of them to pass into the hands of a naval Power; but we agreed that some conditions would be required in restoring them to Turkey for the safeguard of the Christian population.

(6) [There are not marked paragraphs in the copy of this document preserved in the Foreign Office.]

An autonomy such as that enjoyed by Samos would perhaps be rather stiff terms to impose upon Turkey at the end of the war.

M. Sazonow suggested that a guarantee that a Turkish Christian governor of the islands should be appointed, the enormous majority of, if not the whole of, the population being Christian, might be asked for.

I said that this would do to table the question, which was one that could not be dealt with till the war between Italy and Turkey was over, and would then be one for all the Six Powers.

E. G.

September 25, 1912.

No. 804.

Note of a conversation between the Marquess of Crewe and M. Sazonow at Crewe Hall, September 29, 1912.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 41779/40809/12/44.

M. Sazonow began with a reference to the trans-Persian Railway, and the question of an option for the Société d'Études, on which Sir Edward Grey had asked him to obtain my view. I said that the proposal appeared to be for a limited option, and when M. Sazonow asked what that meant, I answered that I could not call it a full option if it remained in our power to defer indefinitely the construction of the line in our sphere of influence. M. Sazonow agreed that this was so, that the option was simply for the Société d'Études, not for the construction of the line, meaning that if and when construction took place it should not be through any other agency. I said that in that case I saw no difficulty in agreeing. As regards the Mohammerah-Khoremadabad line, M. Sazonow said that it ought to be made a joint arrangement between the two countries, as he believed that others, and in particular Germany, would try to share in it. He quite recognised the value of linking up this line with Burujird and ultimately with Tehran and the system to the north, but on my pointing out that there would be a desire to continue the line to Hamadan, he said that he feared there would be strong opposition to that extension, because it was believed that even a line from Khoremadabad to the Gulf would divert much trade in the Indian direction.

On the question of the Persian Government and the possible appointment of Saad-ed-Dowleh as Regent, M. Sazonow was impressed by the difficulty of procedure. I had said the previous evening that if the present Regent is really so anxious to resign as M. Sazonow thought, the best course might be to get him and his Ministers to agree on the successor and to nominate him, this being, in the absence of a Medjliss, the nearest method to a constitutional one. M. Sazonow now said that he thought this worth trying, though he was afraid that the present Regent might not be on good enough terms with Saad-ed-Dowleh to render it probable that he would agree.

Turning to Afghanistan, M. Sazonow said that some relief to their traders on the frontier, who were harassed by perpetual difficulties, was greatly needed, and he thought that we might help in getting the Amir to act in accordance with article 3 of the Convention of 1907. When I mentioned irrigation and locusts, M. Sazonow said that these were two most important points, but that, even if the Russians were met on these, other questions would continually be cropping up. I said that I would ask the Viceroy to represent to the Amir that it would be wise of him to act in a neighbourly spirit in such matters, but that I did not think it would be much use

⁽¹⁾ [This document is placed before Sir Edward Grey's Memorandum of September 24 (v. immediately succeeding document) because it was included in the record printed for the Cabinet (*cp. supra*, p. 750, *Ed. note*).]

to press him again for a general recognition of the terms of article 3. I hoped that M. Sazonow would recognise that our powers were greatly limited by the policy of non-interference with Afghanistan which we had deliberately adopted when the whole Asiatic situation, especially as between Russia and Great Britain, was altogether different. In consequence our own people had no general access to Afghanistan, and we could not expect more to be done for Russians at our instance than we should ask for ourselves. However, I would consult fully with the Viceroy to see how far we could go in meeting their wishes.

We then passed to the question of a consul at Tashkend. M. Sazonow said it was most difficult for them to admit consuls to any part of Central Asia, and if we had one at Tashkend the Germans would at once ask for one, and could not be refused. I said that a consul was an officer appointed in connection with trade, and that every Foreign Office in Europe was always crushing the pretensions of the consuls to be diplomatic officers. Our Indians traded greatly with Bokhara and suffered seriously from lack of representation, and other Powers were not in this position. But if they could not give way on this, could not they relax their passport regulations in favour of Indian traders, and allow an assistant to our consul-general at Meshed to pay stated visits to places in Russian Turkestan, when he could look into business matters affecting British subjects. M. Sazonow said that if he could have a communication from the Foreign Office embodying the grievances complained of, with specific facts, he would promise to look thoroughly into the question, and thought he could do something to satisfy us. I said that though we did not state that a Russian consul at Bombay would be on the same footing as a British consul at Tashkend, yet the Government of India, who were keenly desirous of the latter, would be easier to deal with over the former if M. Sazonow could do as he hoped.

We did not discuss in detail the question of Chinese Turkestan and Hunza, &c.. M. Sazonow saying that he wished to declare categorically that Russia had no wish to take over the administration of Chinese Turkestan. If there was ever question of their advancing in that region, it would only be in the immediate neighbourhood of its northern boundary, by Kulja and the Ili River, where the frontier was easy to cross and where incidents might occur on either side. But as to Kashgar and the neighbourhood of the Kashmir frontier, they were most inaccessible from Russian Turkestan, and they had no desire for any footing there. It was only the ill-treatment, of a barbarous sort, of Russian traders at Kashgar which had caused the increase of the force, and there was no wish to leave it there. In any part of Chinese Turkestan there would be no question of a Russian move without informing us beforehand.

As to Thibet, about which Sir Edward Grey had already spoken, I said that we had no wish to enter it, but quite the contrary, and that in my view, the posting at Lhasa of a British officer as agent would be not worth the risk. But India must regard with concern any Chinese encroachment in Thibet, and we had told the Chinese Government so in terms undiplomatically frank. It might therefore be necessary to know what is going on in Thibet from a source on which we could rely. M. Sazonow said that if any definite change were made in the convention which would appear to be to our sole advantage, he would be seriously attacked at home. He hoped we should be willing, therefore, to obtain our information privately. I asked whether, if Chinese aggression caused us to take action apparently contrary to the convention, public opinion in Russia would not be more excited than if it were modified in cold blood to a slight extent. M. Sazonow emphatically disputed this, and said that, for example, our recent warning to China was now well known in Russia, and if as a sequel to a Chinese advance we were to occupy the Chumbi valley, he did not believe that a word would be said. When I mentioned some rectification of the Nepal frontier, he said that this would be on a different footing, because it affected the subject-matter about which the convention was framed. On the whole, however, he thought it better to deal with any matter affecting Thibet as it naturally arose, and not to attempt a formal revision of any points. At the

same time, if we were able to give material assistance in smoothing things with Afghanistan, he would be able to face opinion in Russia more easily in connection with other questions.

C.

No. 805.

Memorandum by Sir Eduard Grey.⁽¹⁾

Private.⁽²⁾

Secret.

Balmoral Castle, September 21, 1912.

M. Sazonow asked me what our Fleet could do to help to protect Russia if by her alliance with France she was involved in war with Germany. It was understood by Russia that France would keep ships based on Bizerta to prevent the Austrian and Turkish ships operating against Russia, but all that Russia could hope to do with her Baltic fleet when ready was to close the Gulf of Finland, and some of her towns must be left exposed.

I said that the question of the use to be made of our fleet if we were at war was rather one for naval experts. I doubted our sending ships into the Baltic unless we were sure of the control of the entrance, and this, if Germany could overrun Denmark, it might be difficult to ensure. But of course our fleet (if it could not get the German fleet to come out and fight, which was what we should like) would shut up and blockade the German North Sea coast and would, if we went to war, do all it could against Germany and to help whoever was at war with Germany. Our superiority over the German Fleet, which we should maintain at all costs, would in this event set the French fleet entirely free for the Mediterranean.

The question of whether we went to war would depend upon how the war came about. No British Government could go to war unless backed by public opinion. Public opinion would not support any aggressive war for a revanche or to hem Germany in and we desired to see difficulties between Germany and other Powers, particularly France, smoothed over when they arose. If however Germany was led by her great, I might say unprecedented strength, to attempt to crush France, I did not think we should stand by and look on, but should do all we could to prevent France from being crushed. That had been our feeling at the time of the Algeciras Conference in 1906 and again last year.

Germany had shown a desire for some agreement with us to ensure that we should under no circumstances take part against her if she was at war. But we had decided to keep our hands free. If Germany dominated the policy of the Continent it would be disagreeable to us as well as to others for we should be isolated.

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [The original of this memorandum, which is in Sir Edward Grey's own hand, is endorsed by him as follows: "Seen by the King. Prime Minister on his return. It should at present not be made official, but a copy should be sent to Sir G. Buchanan and Sir F. Bertie. Sir A. Nicolson and Lord Crewe should see it. E. G."]

⁽²⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 55.]

No. 806.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

September 30, 1912.

I hope you have received safely a letter which I sent you last evening with enclosures from Crewe.⁽²⁾ On my way up to London my official conscience smote me

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 55.]

⁽²⁾ [There is a letter in the Carnock MSS., Vol. VI of 1912, from Sir A. Nicolson to Sir E. Grey, from Crewe Hall, dated September 29, but no enclosures.]

at having entrusted to the post some conf[identia]l documents—but I think our post is safe. In the Press communiqué⁽³⁾ Sazonow did not like inserting “no new political agreement affecting Persia or anything else,” he demurred to the last 3 words. I pointed out that their insertion would cover the whole political field—and calm all minds that of Germany included—but he said he would do that himself when at Berlin. I did not insist and I hope you will approve of the communiqué. I inserted the word “assist” in strengthening the Persian Gov[ernmen]t, as I thought it would show our critics that we desired the cooperation of that inert body the Persian Gov[ernmen]t—and did not intend to take over the business independently of them. Sazonow made a curious remark to me. He said “I do not know if our relations will always remain so intimate and friendly as they are at present”—I asked what he meant. He said he alluded to the Daily News attitude and that of other organs as well as that of a section of the Liberal party. I told him that we should not attach undue importance to the utterances of the Daily News, Persian Committee, and other extreme sections—that the bulk of opinion was in favour of our understanding—and above all the Gov[ernmen]t were also—I took the opportunity of adding from myself that I hoped that Russia would be careful always not to make the position of all adherents of the understanding and especially of yourself more difficult than was necessary. I said that there was no more convinced and loyal adherent of the understanding than yourself, and yet occasionally you were hard put to it to defend certain acts of the Russian Auth[orit]ies. He took this very well and seemed to be tranquillized as to opinion here. I am not sure, however, whether it would not be well if the King were to write privately to the Emperor. The latter is all important and if he is influenced in any way by any misgivings it would be desirable to remove them. Sazonow told me he had brought a letter from the Emperor to the King, and so an opportunity is offered for a reply, and we could draw up something which H[is] M[ajesty] could embody in a private letter—I am always nervous as to Russia eventually resenting the violent attacks made upon her by the ill informed and misguided people here, with whom I have no patience. Her friendship is absolutely essential to us—but I need not expatiate to you on this subject.

I am getting all papers ready for Cabinet circulation but proofs will be sent to you before they are definitely printed. I am also sending the absolutely necessary telegram to Townley,⁽⁴⁾—some of the conversations can go by bag. The Dep[artmen]t will prepare replies to Sazonow's various Aide Memoires—based on your minutes, &c.—and the D[ra]fts will be sent to you first. I hope Crewe has made records of his conversations yesterday with Sazonow. I am enquiring as to this. I find Sazonow a very different man from the one I knew in St. Petersburg—all the spring and elasticity seem to have gone out of him, and he is really an invalid—and rather a poor one. Pray do not think of cutting short your last week of holiday. If these wild gentlemen in the Balkans start on the war path, we can't stop them, and I think we have emptied our sack of warnings &c. The head of Cammell Lairds has been enquiring this morning whether we have any objection to their selling to the Greek Gov[ernmen]t immediately two battleships they have ready for Argentina. This raises a difficult point which our legal advisers must settle. It looks as if Greece also intended to play a va banque game. A very pretty state of affairs.

Yours sincerely,

A. NICOLSON.

⁽³⁾ [cp. *supra*, p. 752, No. 808, note ⁽³⁾.]

⁽⁴⁾ [Not reproduced. This telegram, No. 608 of September 29, 1912, D. 11-30 P.M. (F.O. 41470/41470/12/34), summarised the first half of the *General Résumé* on the Persian question contained in the memorandum on Sir Edward Grey's conversations with M. Sazonov at Balmoral (*re supra*, p. 752).]

Sir A. Nicolson to Lord Stamfordham

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Stamfordham,

October 2, 1912.

From a remark which was dropped to me by M. Sazonow, I gathered that the anti-Russian feeling prevalent in certain sections of the British public have made some impression on him.⁽²⁾ and that he was a little anxious whether the relations between the two countries might not suffer somewhat. I explained to him that the sections to which he referred were really not of influence, and that the bulk of reasonable opinion, both Governmental and opposition, were in favour of maintaining our good understanding with Russia. It is of essential importance that no possible cloud should come over our relations with Russia—and I thought that, if The King would be pleased to approve, His Majesty might write a private letter to The Emperor in which the following observations might be embodied.

That His Majesty had been much pleased to receive M. Sazonow and had been gratified that the conversations which had taken place between M. Sazonow and Sir E. Grey had been of a very satisfactory character. His Majesty attaches so much importance to the maintenance of most friendly and intimate relations between the two countries that he feels sure that The Emperor will be satisfied with the report which M. Sazonow will be able to make to him, and will join with him in the earnest wish that the relations between the two countries will remain always as cordial and as frank as they are at present.

I think some remarks on the above lines would be of service, as The Emperor is the all important factor. The King received, I believe, a letter from The Emperor so a reply would come naturally—and of course His Majesty could not make any mention of what is thought in certain sections here, as His Majesty is not supposed to be conscious of them.

I have mentioned the matter to Sir E. Grey, and he quite agrees that a letter from The King would be of use and opportune. I trust The King will forgive my making the suggestion.

A. NICOLSON.]

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. VI of 1912.]

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding and immediately succeeding documents.]

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 42418/36055/12/38.

(No. 299.)

St. Petersburg, D. October 6, 1912.

Sir,

R. October 10, 1912.

I have the honour to report that the tone of the Russian press towards England has recently undergone a very considerable change. The same journals which hailed the approaching visit of Monsieur Sazonow to Balmoral with extreme satisfaction and approval have now adopted an attitude of corresponding mistrust of England and her policy. The attitude of the radical section of the English press on the question of Persia is resented as selfish and suspicious, and great disappointment is expressed at the apparent failure of the visit to lead to any decisive action in connection with the Balkans. Persia has merely local interest at the present moment whereas the Slav question is one on which all classes in Russia are really

⁽¹⁾ [A copy of this despatch was sent to the Director of Military Operations.]

united. The entire press in this country consequently felt aggrieved and disappointed at the importance given in the English press to the Persian question to the neglect of that of the Balkans in regard to which such important results were anticipated here from Monsieur Sazonow's visit.

On the 4th instant an article appeared in the "Novoe Vremya," written by Monsieur Stolypin, a brother of the late President of the Council of Ministers. warning Russia from putting too much faith in her entente with England. The rivalry between England and Germany is a factor which must be borne in mind in Russia's relations with us. In a war with Germany, England would endeavour to drag Russia and France into the struggle which would be one of existence for her but which could not fail to be prejudicial to Russia's interests. Monsieur Stolypin, in fact, endeavours to convey the impression that the present entente with England cannot be effective in view of the fundamental divergence of the interests of the two countries.

The same journal published a leading article yesterday in a similar strain entitled "England and the Balkans" and based on an article in the "Temps."

According to the "Temps," England's policy in the Balkans must largely be governed by the fact that she is a great Mussulman Power and by the knowledge that any disturbance of the status quo would react unfavourably on her position in India. For these reasons England is sincere in her desire to maintain the status quo but she must do so by supporting the present Turkish Ministry. The danger for England lies in the demands of the Balkan States, which may make the work of Kiamil Pasha impossible.

This line of argument is most distasteful to the "Novoe Vremya" who sees in it a policy diametrically opposed to that of Russia whose interests are bound up with the Slavs and not the Musulmans in the Balkan Peninsula. The journal declares that the time has come to put an end to the unjust treatment of the Slavs in Macedonia who have been downtrodden for the last thirty years in order to avoid giving offence at Constantinople. It argues further that England wants war because war must be the outcome of supporting the Turkish Government. The article concludes with a characteristic attack on the supineness of Russian diplomacy whose duty at least it is to establish definitely what would be the attitude of England in the event of Austrian intervention.

I have also the honour to enclose translation of an interesting article from one of the leading journals in Moscow⁽²⁾ discussing the relative value to Russia of the Triple Entente, which has been forwarded to me by His Majesty's Consul.

This article merits attention, as the Octobrist party whose views it represents have always been staunch supporters of the Anglo-Russian understanding, while, on more than one occasion lately, somewhat similar language has been held to myself as regards Lynch's agreement with the Deutsche Bank and the alleged refusal of His Majesty's Government to support some proposal which Monsieur Sazonow is said to have made in London with regard to the question of Macedonian reforms.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

(2) [Not reproduced.]

No. 809.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 41779/40809/12/88.

(No. 840.) Very Confidential.

Sir.

Foreign Office, October 8, 1912.

I tr[ansmit] to Y[our] E[xcellency] herewith a copy of a Cabinet paper containing a record of my conversations with the Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] at Balmoral Castle, as also certain Memoranda handed to me by H[is] E[xcellency] on that occasion.⁽²⁾

I also enclose herewith five Memoranda in reply to those of M. Sazonow, and I have to request Y[our] E[xcellency] to take an early opportunity of handing them to H[is] E[xcellency].

Extra copies of these Memoranda are also enclosed for the archives of H[is] M[ajesty's] Embassy.

[I am, &c.

E. GREY.]

Enclosure in No. 809.

Memoranda respecting Conversations at Balmoral between M. Sazonow and Sir Edward Grey.

(1.)

Afghanistan.

His Majesty's Government recognise that there is force in the Imperial Government's representations as to the advantages that might follow from closer commercial relations between the neighbouring countries of Asiatic Russia and Afghanistan, and from their co-operation in works of a civilising character, such as irrigation and the extirpation of the locust pest. They would, however, observe that, quite apart from the personal attitude of the Amir, public opinion in Afghanistan does not at present appear to tolerate the idea of more intimate connection with countries beyond her borders, and that His Majesty's Government, although themselves in treaty relations with the Amir, suffer equally with the Russian Government from this state of feeling. For example, no general access to Afghanistan is enjoyed by British subjects.

The policy of non-interference with Afghanistan having been deliberately adopted by this country, His Majesty's Government would feel great difficulty in pressing the Amir to accord to Russian subjects facilities which they are precluded from asking for their own, and they do not think that any good result would follow from urging the Amir to give a general recognition of the terms of Article 8 of the Anglo-Russian Convention.

They will, however, consult with the Government of India with a view to representing to the Amir that it would be wise of him to act in a neighbourly spirit in such matters as would fall within the scope of that Article.

As regards the importance of arms and ammunition into Afghanistan, His Majesty's Government have been, and are, doing everything in their power at a heavy cost to British and Indian revenues to prevent arms going overland into Afghanistan from the Persian Gulf for the use of Afghan tribesmen. This traffic,

(1) [This despatch, with its enclosures, was repeated to all the Embassies, and to Tehran. A copy was sent to the India Office on October 9.]

(2) [v. *supra*, pp. 750-61, Nos. 808-4.]

they would observe, is now centred in Muscat where its effective control has for long been rendered impossible owing to the claim made by the French Government, based upon their treaty relations with the Sultan, that the trade in arms and ammunition should be free. The result has been seriously to prejudice the cause of order and good government in the surrounding countries, in Afghanistan, and during the last year more particularly in Persia, where the two Governments have so long endeavoured to bring about more satisfactory conditions. Recently the Sultan of Muscat has introduced a system of regulating the traffic in order to prevent the wholesale export of arms and ammunition, and His Majesty's Government are now exerting their efforts to secure from the French Government the acceptance of this system.

As regards the presence in Afghanistan of Turkish Military instructors, His Majesty's Government would remark that their engagement is a matter of internal administration in regard to which it would be difficult for them to make any representations to the Amir, though they apprehend that the instructors have probably come under Chauvinistic influence in Turkey and that their disposition is likely to be as anti-British as it is anti-Russian. His Majesty's Government are disposed, however, to think that their number is less than that stated. If anything can be done, it would seem best to proceed by discouraging at Constantinople the engagement of these instructors.

Foreign Office, October 4, 1912.

(2.)

Russian Consular Representation at Bombay.

With regard to the suggested establishment of a British Consulate at Tashkent, His Majesty's Government recognise the difficulty felt by the Russian Government in complying with their request, on the ground that demands for a similar privilege would at once be made by other Powers. But they would point out that, so far as they are aware, Great Britain is the only European Power whose commercial interests in Russian Central Asia are on an appreciable scale, or whose subjects reside in those regions to any considerable number. The difficulties to which the absence of British Consular representation has given rise are explained in the attached statement. In the circumstances His Majesty's Government would again urge that there are strong grounds for the establishment of a British Consulate at Tashkent, which do not exist in the case of any other Power.

Should, however, the Russian Government still find themselves unable to consider this proposal favourably, His Majesty's Government would suggest that arrangements might be made

(1) to amend the passport regulations in Russian Central Asia so far as they press heavily on the Indian traders, and (2) to allow an Assistant to the British Consul-General at Meshed to pay periodical visits to the principal trade centres in Russian Turkestan—due notice of such visits being given to the Russian authorities—to deal with purely commercial matters affecting the interests of British subjects.

Should the Russian Government see their way to grant these concessions, and further to agree to the establishment of British Consular posts at Krasnoyarsk and Nicolaiesk, and to the advancement of the Vice-Consul at Vladivostok to the status of Consul, His Majesty's Government would not raise any further objection to the appointment of a Russian Vice-Consul at Bombay.

Grievances of British Subjects in Russian Central Asia.

The principal grievances of British Indian subjects trading in Bokhara and Russian Turkestan are as follows:—

- (1) the delay caused to trade agents, and the consequent loss to business, entailed by the new passport regulations introduced in 1909;

- (2) the hardship suffered by British Indian subjects owing to the procedure adopted for dividing among creditors the estates of deceased or bankrupt debtors—a procedure which places British Indian creditors at a disadvantage as compared with those of Russian nationality,
- (3) the difficulty in realising the estates of deceased British Indian subjects.

As regards (1) and (2), the position was fully explained to the Russian Government in Sir George Buchanan's note to Monsieur Sazonow dated the 27th February 1911.⁽³⁾

With regard to (3), the difficulty is mainly due to the decision of the Russian Government in 1909 to insist on the strict observance of the law requiring claimants to appear before the proper district courts in Russia, either personally or by attorney. In view of the inconvenience involved to British Indian claimants, the Government of India proposed a reciprocal arrangement to cover the case of Russians dying in India, as well as of British Indians dying in Russia. This proposal was placed before the Russian Government in Mr. O'Beirne's note of the 23rd October 1910,⁽⁴⁾ to which no reply has yet been received.

The following specific instances of the inconvenience to which British Indian subjects are liable to be put, owing to the absence of British Consular representation may be cited :—

- (1) the case of Abdul Rashid Hadji Mohammedunoff reported in Sir G. Buchanan's despatch No. 57, 8th March, 1911,⁽⁵⁾ who was refused permission to remain at Kerki to wind up his affairs. The British Ambassador's intervention on the man's behalf was unsuccessful.
- (2) the case of Tiritsing son of Nandasing, and Surtaram son of Seetaram, who were arrested at Samarcand at the beginning of the present year, apparently on the charge of being spies. The charge is believed to be quite without foundation. The men were kept in prison till the 14th June 1912, when they were released on bail. The British Ambassador has made representations to the Russian Government with a view to the men's trial being expedited, and their papers being returned to them. (See Sir G. Buchanan's despatch No. 255, 17th August, 1912.⁽⁶⁾)

(3.)

Trans-Persian Railway.

His Majesty's Government share the view of the Russian Government that it is desirable to occupy the ground by securing an option for the *Société d'Étude*, whereby the two Governments will be in a position to say when and where a Trans-Persian line would be built.

His Majesty's Government have therefore no objection to the Russian Government constructing a line to Teheran, and subject to all the reserves and conditions already stipulated as to the route of the railway outside the Russian sphere and that it shall not, without agreement with His Majesty's Government proceed beyond the Russian sphere, have authorized His Majesty's Minister at Teheran to co-operate with his Russian colleague to secure the said option for the *Société d'Étude*.

⁽³⁾ [This note was dated February 7/20, and explained the position fully. (F.O. 7166/3037/11/38.)]

⁽⁴⁾ [The note to which reference is here made was communicated by Mr. O'Beirne to the Russian Government as the result of instructions sent to him on October 17. (F.O. 371/977. 35363/630/10/38.) In his despatch No. 480 of December 7, Mr. O'Beirne reported this action. (F.O. 371/977. 44695/630/10/38.)]

⁽⁵⁾ [Not reproduced, as the tenour is sufficiently indicated above. (F.O. 9076/3037/11/38.)]

⁽⁶⁾ [Not reproduced.]

The British group of the *Société d'Étude* have also been informed that they would be justified in sending to Teheran a representative to co-operate with representatives of the other groups of the *Société* to the same end.

As regards the suggestion that the *Société* should be encouraged to make a big loan to the Persian Government such action appears somewhat difficult, as there is to be no Anglo-Persian guarantee.

Foreign Office, October 4, 1912.

(4.)

British Railways in Persia

The British syndicate which has applied to the Persian Government for a concession for the construction of certain railways in South Persia is styled the Persian Railways Syndicate but does not include Messrs. Seligman.

As regards the Railways in question His Majesty's Government informed the Russian Government early in 1911 of their wishes on the subject and later expressed their willingness to assent in principle to the Trans Persian Railway, on condition, *inter alia*, that the Russian Government would support the British demands for the railways in question.

As regards the Mohammerah Khorremabad line, this is the only railway for which His Majesty's Government are pressing at present, and they take note of Monsieur Sazonow's assurance that in view of its essential importance to British trade, he will not oppose it.

Concerning the possible extension of the line to Burujird situated in the Russian sphere, a means of obviating any difficulty in the matter might be found if the Russian Government invoked the aid of British capital for the construction of the part in the Russian sphere, or for a line from Khorremabad to Isfahan thereby rendering less important the branch from Khanikin to Teheran.

With regard to further railway concessions in the neutral zone His Majesty's Government are quite prepared to discuss the matter with the Russian Government and to request the Syndicate to send out a Representative to St. Petersburg. His Majesty's Government may ask Russia to consent to them in due course, it being understood that such consent would not be claimed as a matter of right until the Trans Persian Railway shall have proceeded beyond the Russian sphere.

As to railways in the British sphere such as Bunder Abbas to Kerman, His Majesty's Government have no doubt that the Imperial Russian Government will admit that these are matters solely affecting British interests, but His Majesty's Government would always be happy to keep the Imperial Russian Government informed of any project of railway enterprise in the British sphere.

Any increase of the Persian public debt due to the construction of railways in the neutral zone may fittingly be dealt with in discussion between the two Governments.

F[oreign] O[ffice], Oct[ober] 4, 1912.

(5.)

Turco-Persian Frontier.

The most recent reports from Constantinople are a good deal more satisfactory.

His Majesty's and the Russian Representatives have suggested territorial concessions which could be made to Turkey in Zohab, but it is possible that it may not be necessary to make them.

The British Vice-Consul at Kasr-i-Shirin is about to proceed to Bagdad to study the papers and advise as to the tribal conditions in the districts which may be ceded.

His Majesty's Government are therefore of opinion that no useful purpose would be served by taking any further action at present.

F[oreign] O[ffice], Oct[ober] 4, 1912.

No. 810.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Buchanan,

London, October 8, 1912.

I had very friendly talks with Sazanoff, and appreciated his friendliness; but I think that he is in a state of weak health, and therefore of low vitality, which makes it difficult for him to come to close grips with questions.

I was afraid that he might want us to take a very strong pro-Balkan and anti Turk line. Instead of that, however, he was very emphatic about putting strong pressure on the Balkan States to keep the peace, and he did not ask for any peremptory language in Constantinople. So all that was easy enough, and I agreed readily to the diplomatic steps that he advocated.

He is more sanguine than I am about getting a loan for Persia. He promised to see financiers in Paris, and to invite them to state the conditions which would induce them to give a loan without asking for a guarantee from the British and Russian Governments. This is the "crux" of the whole matter, and you should ask him when he returns whether he made any progress. If not, I can see nothing for it but to lend sufficient money direct to the Persian Government to create a force under foreign officers, Russian if need be in the northern sphere, that will be able to establish such order in the country as will ensure the collection of the maliat, and thereby provide the security on which the financiers will be willing to make a loan.

I made no secret in my conversations with Sazanoff that we wish to work with Russia, and will not enter into any engagement with Germany that would tie our hands as regards Russia or France.

.⁽²⁾

I am so sorry to hear that you are still unwell, and I hope for better news soon.

.⁽²⁾

We must do all we can to keep Austria and Russia co-operating together in Balkan affairs: it is the only way to prevent them from falling out.

Yours sincerely,

[E. GREY.]

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 35.]

⁽²⁾ [The dotted lines are in the typewritten copy from which this letter is taken.]

No. 811.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 42741/33672/12/44.

(No. 301.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. October 9, 1912.

R. October 12, 1912.

I feel it is my duty to call your attention to the deep feeling of disappointment which has been aroused in this country by the apparent failure of Monsieur Sazonow's visit to England to produce the decisive results which were expected of it in regard to the Balkan question. The publication of the official communiqué⁽¹⁾ concerning the

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 752, No 808, note ⁽³⁾.]

conversations at Balmoral was followed here by an outburst of resentment against England and it is clear that Russian public opinion attributes, however unjustly, the abrupt aggravation of the Balkan crisis to the lack of support given to Russia by her partners in the Triple Entente. The attacks on England were begun by the "Novoe Vremya," which of itself need not be too seriously taken into account. But the same tone was soon adopted by all sections of the Russian press and consideration must be accorded it when the "Golos Moskv," hitherto the staunchest of the supporters of the friendship with England, has gone so far as to suggest the abandonment of the Triple Entente in favour of a rapprochement with Germany (see my despatch No. 299 of the 6th instant).⁽²⁾

I do not desire to give undue weight to the utterances of the press in this country. But there is one question in Russia on which public opinion cannot be disregarded. In its Slav sympathies all Russia is united and both the Emperor himself and his Government would be powerless in face of a truly national Panslavist movement.

It is universally felt here that the seriousness of the situation in the Balkans was not realised at Balmoral and that even when events rendered its gravity unmistakably evident, England was still averse to putting pressure on Turkey for fear of compromising herself in the eyes of her Musulman subjects.

The sudden revulsion of feeling against England is all the more remarkable when the present mistrust is compared with the enthusiasm which preceded Monsieur Sazonow's visit. But it would seem that popular confidence in England has been severely shaken and a very wide spread doubt has arisen as to the value to Russia of the existing entente. It is not easy to realise the sensitiveness of Russia on the Slav question. The recent events in the Balkans have strung this sensitiveness to a high pitch of nervous tension and the attitude of England will be closely watched during the present crisis. If it is felt that England is not to be relied on to support Russia in matters which affect the Slav interests and sympathies of the latter, the prospects of the permanency of the good relations between the two countries will suffer a blow, the impression of which it will be extremely difficult to remove.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

MINUTES.

The sensitiveness of Russian opinion is an additional reason why we sh[oul]d not allow ourselves to be misrepresented as has happened both in Austria and in France.

The Russian Press realises Russia's dilemma in the present crisis, and is naturally "jumpy." It may well jump back to its cordiality, manifested before M. Sazonow's visit; but w[oul]d it not be well, in view of the gravity of the present temporary revulsion, that some stimulus sh[oul]d be given to it to recur to its former attitude: i.e., that the Russian authorities sh[oul]d issue a corrective (The French Gov[ernmen]t have done so in the Débats.) It w[oul]d be both easy and important to do so. But we shall probably have to make the suggestion ourselves.

R. G. V.

Oct[ober] 14.

R. P. M.

I wish that I could regard the present state of feeling in Russia as a mere passing whim of ill humour which a Gov[ernmen]t communiqué could rectify and dissipate. We shall have before long to make up our minds whether we will take up the Balkan cause in co-operation with Russia, and risk offending our Moslem opinion and Turkey: or whether to placate the latter we shall imperil the Triple Entente and probably break it.

A. N.

M. Sazonow concentrated his attention at Balmoral on putting pressure on the Balkan States. There was therefore no question then of supporting him in a pro-Slav policy for he did not advocate it or seem to think that it would be the Russian policy.

If it becomes Russia's policy much will depend on the circumstances under which the policy is declared. It may coincide with an outburst of feeling in the same direction here.

E. G.

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 763-4, No. 808.]

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Sir Edward,

St. Petersburg, October 17, 1912.

I am writing a long fortnightly letter to Nicolson, so I only send you a line to thank you for the one which you wrote me by last bag.

Sazanow dined with me last night, and told us all about the Balmoral visit, with which he was much delighted. He greatly appreciated the kindness shown him by the King and Queen and told me that he had much enjoyed the friendly conversations which he had had with you.

I was rather surprised to hear that he had not proposed some energetic representations at Constantinople, and fancy that he did not do so knowing how very difficult it would have been for you to agree to them. He seemed quite satisfied with the instructions which you had sent to Marling immediately after his arrival in England;⁽²⁾ but in the course of one of our recent conversations he remarked that we were very difficult people to deal with where Turkey was concerned.

It is a great relief to know that Austria has given such satisfactory assurances with regard to her attitude, as there is now every reason to hope that the war will be localised, at all events for the present. I confess however that I am very pessimistic as to what may happen when we have to face the question of the final settlement of the Macedonian question.

Many thanks for your kind enquiries about my health. I am progressing gradually, though like Sazanow I am still suffering from low vitality and am troubled with my head if I work too long at a stretch.

Yours sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

(¹) [Grey MSS., Vol. 35.]

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 701, No. 730.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Buchanan,

St. Petersburg, October 21, 1912.

The comment upon what Sazonow said to you as repeated in your letter to me of the 17th⁽²⁾ is, I think, that he really did not find me difficult to deal with about Turkey, but that he now finds it convenient to think that he did.

The fact is that he was, at Balmoral, much concerned at the blaze he had kindled in the Balkans by fomenting an alliance of the Balkan States: his whole thought was how to put out the fire, and his great apprehension was that Austria would confront him with a forward policy. While brooding on these things he forgot or underestimated the pro-Slav feeling of Russia. And now he cannot imagine how it was that at Balmoral he said so little about pressure on Turkey, and he has persuaded himself that it must have been because he knew it would be disagreeable

(¹) [Grey MSS., Vol. 35.]

(²) [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

to me: and he remembers something I said about the effect of Russian action in *Persia* upon Mussulmans in India.⁽³⁾

To be quite fair, I must admit that it would have been inconvenient at Balmoral to have been pressed about Turkey, but I am sure that was not Sazanow's motive at the time: and if pressed I might have done more, though I cannot say that, as I had no occasion to make up my mind at the time.

Yours sincerely,

E. G[REY].

(3) [*v supra*, p 751, No. 803.]

APPENDIX I.

Correspondence between Count Károlyi and Mr Gladstone

[*ED NOTE*.—The following correspondence between Mr Gladstone and Count Károlyi is printed here because of the attention drawn to it in 1909 through Sir Edward Grey's speech in the House of Commons on July 22 (*Parl. Deb.*, 5th Ser., 1909, (House of Commons), Vol. 8, pp 646-61). *cp. supra*, pp. 30-1, No. 26, and note (2). The incident is mentioned in J. Morley: *Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, Book VIII, Chapter I, § 3 There appears to be no reference in Lord Cleave. *Life of Lord Rosebery*.]

Count Károlyi to Mr Gladstone.

F.O. Austria-Hungary 985.

Dear Mr. Gladstone,

18, Belgrave Square, May 1, 1880.

In conformity with our understanding, I beg your kind leave to point out to you those passages in your Midlothian speech which were peculiarly apt to wound me and to hurt the Austro-Hungarian national feelings.

The first passage refers to the Emperor whom you cite as having said words which he never uttered and which it would never enter his mind to use, viz. that he should have designated you to Sir H. Elliot as "a pestilential person." As you are aware, H[is] M[ajesty] has only in an occasional conversation with Sir H[enry] expressed his deep regret at your hostile dispositions towards us and his hope that the cordial relations between England and Austria would not be disturbed by them.

Let me insert how happy I feel that this hope—if I may be allowed to draw a definite conclusion for the future from the official and so highly satisfactory declaration of Lord Granville—should already seem to be fulfilled.

The second passage is the following one "There is not one instance, there is not a spot upon the whole map, where you can lay your finger and say, there Austria did good."

I cannot imagine a more sweeping condemnation of the whole history and policy of a country.

Allow me to inclose a printed extract of your speech.⁽¹⁾ I can but very thankfully note the very friendly way in which you have yesterday expressed your intention to meet my desire, which I beg to repeat is merely a personal one, but I assure you very deeply felt. I feel now convinced that you will think it fit to say at the first public occasion some soothing words regretting the above-indicated passages and the whole spirit of your indictment against us. Such words would certainly produce the best possible effect on my special position here and on the public opinion of my country.

Permit me before concluding to dwell once more on the agreeable impression which chiefly the open-hearted character and the frankness of our conversation of yesterday has left on me.

As to our position towards the Eastern Affairs, I can only repeat in the most positive manner that we have no desire whatever to extend or add to the rights which we have acquired under the treaty of Berlin, and that in fact any such extension would be actually prejudicial to Austria-Hungary.

Might it not be possible to insert some friendly words of the above said soothing nature into your reply to the Ministerial toast at to-day's dinner? *Bis dat qui cito dat.*

Au revoir in a few hours.

Very truly yours,
KÁROLYI.

Mr. Gladstone to Count Károlyi.

F.O. Austria-Hungary 985.

Dear Count Károlyi,

London, May 4, 1880.

I thank your Excellency for your letter, which, uniting frankness with kindness renders my task an easy one.

Without discussing the accuracy of certain expressions in the report you have forwarded, I proceed at once to the subject. At the moment when I accepted from the Queen the duty of forming an Administration, I forthwith resolved that I would not, as a Minister, either repeat, or even defend in argument, polemical language in regard to more than one Foreign Power, which I had used individually, when in a position of greater freedom and less responsibility.

Two points have been raised by your Excellency—I will dispose of the first by expressing my regret that I should even have seemed to impute to H[is] I[mperial] M[ajesty] language wh[ic]h he did not use.

Your Excellency says that H[is] I[mperial] M[ajesty] expressed in conversation with Sir H. Elliot "his deep regret at my hostile dispositions towards Austria." Permit me to say I have no such dispositions towards any country whatever and that I at all times have particularly and heartily wished well to Austria in the performance of the arduous task of consolidating the Empire—I feel a cordial respect for the efforts of the Emperor and I trust that their complete success may honourably and notably mark his reign.

(1) [Not reproduced.]

With respect to my animadversions on the Foreign policy of Austria in times when it was active beyond the borders, I will not conceal from Y[our] Ex[cellency] that grave apprehensions had been excited in my mind lest Austria should play a part in the Balkan Peninsula hostile to the freedom of the emancipated populations, and to the reasonable and warranted hopes of the subjects of the Sultan. The apprehensions were founded, it is true, upon secondary evidence, but it was not the evidence of hostile witnesses, and it was the best at my command.

Your Excellency is now good enough to assure me that your Gov[ernment] has no desire whatever to extend or add to the rights it has acquired under the Treaty of Berlin, and that any such extension would be actually prejudicial to Austria-Hungary.

Permit me at once to state to your Ex[cellency] that had I been in possession of such an assurance as I have now been able to receive, I never would have uttered any one of the words which Your Ex[cellency] justly describes as of a painful and wounding character. Whether it was my misfortune or my fault that I was not so supplied, I will not now attempt to determine but will at once express my serious concern that I should, in default of it, have been led to refer to transactions of an earlier period, or to use terms of censure wh[ic]h I can now wholly banish from my mind.

I think that the explanation I now tender should be made not less public than the speech which has supplied the occasion for it, and as to the form of such publicity I desire to accede to whatever may be your Excellency's wish—I have only to thank Y[our] Ex[cellency] alike for the matter and the manner both of your oral and of your written communications.

With high consid[eratio]n,

I have, &c.

W. E. GLADSTONE

Mr. Gladstone to Count Károlyi.

F.O. Austria-Hungary 985.

Private.

Dear Count Károlyi,

Harley Street, May 4, 1880

I add a line with regard to your closing suggestion. The very limited field accorded to me on the night of the 1st, and the strict exclusion of even defensive politics, prevented my acting upon it. Had I mentioned Foreign Powers, it would I think have been going beyond the precedents, and my allusion must have been in such very general terms as perhaps to draw attention more to what it did not contain than to what it did.

Believe me,

Y[ours] very faithfully,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

APPENDIX II.

Lord Salisbury and the Question of the Straits.

[ED. NOTE.—At the time of the Tcharykov negotiations of November–December 1911 reference was made by Sir Edward Grey to the principle laid down by Lord Salisbury “that, if the Straits were opened at all, they must be opened equally for every one.” (*v. supra*, p. 321, No. 304.) The occasion cited is almost certainly that described in the first of the two following documents. It has been thought desirable, however, to print also the despatch to Sir H. Rumbold of January 20, 1897, as this explains further Lord Salisbury's attitude to the Straits.]

Lord Salisbury to Sir W. White.

F.O. Turkey 4473.

(No. 214)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 2, 1891

The Turkish Ambassador called at the F[oreign] O[ffice] on the 24th ult[imo] and communicated a circular desp[atch] from his Gov[ernment], of which a copy is enclosed, describing the arrangement recently arrived at between the Sublime Porte and the Russian Embassy with regard to the passage of the Straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles by vessels of the Russian Volunteer fleet, carrying the merchant flag, and conveying convicts or soldiers on their way to or from the Russian possessions in the far East.

H[er] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] desire to express their thanks to the Porte for the explanations offered in this paper. They take note of the declaration that there has been no infringement of the Treaty stipulations by which the Sultan pledges himself not to permit the passage of the Straits by ships of war in time of peace, and they are glad that the well known intention of the Porte to maintain those stipulations has received a fresh confirmation.

The agreement of the Powers on this subject is recorded in a series of international instruments—in the Convention of London of July 13, 1841,⁽¹⁾ in the Convention annexed to the Treaty of Paris of March 30, 1856,⁽²⁾ again (with certain modifications required by the altered circumstances of the case) in the Treaty of London of March 13, 1871⁽³⁾ and once more by Article 63 of the Treaty of Berlin of July 13, 1878.⁽⁴⁾

In the opinion of H[er] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] it is of the essence of the rule thus sanctioned by the European Powers that it is applicable to all countries alike, and that any right in respect to the passage of the Straits which is a departure from the provisions of the existing treaties, will, if granted by the Sultan to one Power be, as a matter of course and *ipso facto*, equally granted to all.⁽⁵⁾

The arrangement made with the Russian Gov[ernment] on the present occasion does not appear to H[er] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] to be of a kind to call for further observation on their part.

Your Excellency will read this de-patch to the Min[iste]r for F[oreign] A[ffairs] and give him a copy of it.

[I am, &c.]
S[ALISBURY]

Lord Salisbury to Sir H. Rumbold.

F.O. Turkey 1884.

(No. 6.) Very Confidential.

Foreign Office, January 20, 1897.

The Austrian Ambassador to-day renewed a proposal which he had made to me in the spring of last year, with respect to the protection of the Straits of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles from any possible enterprise on the part of Russia. He stated, as he had stated on the former occasion, that in the view of the Austrian Gov[ernment] it was England that was more interested than any other Power in preventing the acquisition of dominion over the Straits by Russia, and that therefore it should be England that should take the lead in defending them against any attempt to establish that dominion. If England would undertake the maritime portion of the task, and would send up a fleet into the Bosphorus to resist any such attack on the side of Russia, the Austrian Gov[ernment] would not refuse on its part to undertake the military measures which would be necessary for preventing Russia, with the help of any of the Balkan States, from establishing itself in a position to command the Straits.

I replied that I did not think that my answer to him on the present occasion could differ substantially from that which I had given to him 12 months ago. I admitted the interest of England in the case, though I could not admit that England had an interest more vital than that of Austria and France. But I said it was quite impossible for England to make any such engagement as that which he desired. The institutions under which we lived entirely prevented H[er] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] from making any engagement with respect to the military or naval action of England upon contingencies which had not yet arisen. When these contingencies arose, they would be fully considered by the Parliament and public opinion of this country, and no influence of any Government, and probably no promise into which any Government might have entered, would in such a case avail to prevent the country from acting upon its own views of what was right and expedient in such a matter. There were three considerations which altered the conditions of the problem, and which therefore made it more difficult to predict beforehand the course which England would think it right to take. In the first place, as His Excellency might have observed, the sympathies of England in respect to the Ottoman dominion had undergone an entire transformation from the complexion which they presented 40 years ago. The process had been to a certain extent gradual, that is to say it was the result of a series of agitations produced by the ruthless and unpopular conduct of the Ottoman Gov[ernment] in various parts of its dominions. But the change was now complete. The antipathy to assisting the Sultan would be extreme, and I could not answer for it that considerations of a higher policy would be sufficiently clear or sufficiently powerful to induce the English people to make great sacrifices of blood and treasure in support of a Gov[ernment] which they so thoroughly detested. The second consideration was that on all former occasions when the policy of England was spoken of as binding her to maintain the Sultan's independence in the Straits, it was always assumed, and followed necessarily from the facts of the time, that such efforts would be made with the sanction and support of the Sultan, and not in spite of him. Such a view of the case could not be confidently held now. By the elaborate fortification of the Dardanelles, and the utter

⁽¹⁾ [v. Hertslet: *Map of Europe by Treaty*, Vol. II, pp. 1024-6.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *ib.*, pp. 1250-65.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *ib.*, Vol. III, pp. 1919-23.]

⁽⁴⁾ [v. *B.F.S.P.*, Vol. 69, pp. 749-67.]

⁽⁵⁾ [Marginal note by Lord Salisbury: "I think this will do very well. I have modified it to prevent our appearing to claim that an exceptional admission—e.g. of a Grand Duke—must necessarily involve the passage of five other Grand Dukes."]

neglect of the Bosphorus, the Sultan had stated as clearly as if it had been written down in a proclamation, that he preferred the probability of being invaded by the Russians to the chance of being assisted by the Western Powers. I knew no declaration of English policy which had ever pointed in the direction of assisting the Sultan to an independence which he did not desire, against an invader whom he himself had welcomed.

The third consideration depended very much upon the second, namely that the forcing of the Dardanelles had become in later years a much more arduous task than it was 20, or even 10 years ago. I could not form a judgment myself on a matter which is not within my competence, but I had told His Excellency last year that the balance of opinion among our nautical experts was strongly unfavourable to any attempt to force the Dardanelles by the action of the fleet, without accompanying it with military measures against the forts by land. If this was true it seemed to me to dispose of the idea that England could alone force her way through the Dardanelles. At the same time I was careful, while pointing out to His Excellency that this statement had been made to him before, to guard myself from any kind of intimation that England renounced the right of taking those measures, if, when the contingency arose, it was thought desirable. I made no kind of pledge one way or the other. I merely reserved our full liberty of action. His Excellency replied that in that case Austria must reserve her full liberty of action also, and that she could not come under any engagement, expressed or implied, with respect to the Straits. It was the strong belief of her Gov[ernment] that whatever policy France might nominally pursue, the necessity of her position would drive her into alliance with Russia, even in such a contingency, and he further stated that unless Austria was backed by the naval force of Great Britain, she could not count, in any action that she might be disposed to take upon Russia, upon the cooperation of Germany.

I stated to His Excellency the apprehensions which I constantly entertained, and which I had mentioned to other Ambassadors, that our hands might be forced by some movement at Constantinople which might threaten the lives of our own nationals. It was very difficult to foresee to what extent we should be placed under compulsion to disregard all other considerations in providing for their security. I hoped that sufficient pressure might be put upon the Sultan to insure his taking the precautions that were necessary against such an emergency. I did not however dwell upon these considerations, because the point of view from which I spoke was almost exactly that of the Austrian Foreign Minister in speaking to your Excellency about a fortnight ago.

[I am, &c.]

S[ALISBURY].

APPENDIX III.

Mr. Wickham Steed on Sir F. Cartwright's Letter of July 9, 1909 ⁽¹⁾

[ED. NOTE.—The following statement by Mr. Wickham Steed has been inserted at his request, after the letter on which it comments had been shown to him. The Editors express no opinion on this or any other phase of this or any other controversy. But they would draw attention to Sir E. Goschen's private letter of October 5, 1908, describing these events (*v. Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, pp. 445-6, No. 381), and Sir Edward Grey's private telegram of October 5 (*ib.*, p. 389, No. 299).]

Sir Fairfax Cartwright's letter to Sir Charles Hardinge can only be judged in the light of contemporary circumstances. Mr James D. Bouchier, *The Times* correspondent in the Balkans, had been taken to task for alleged failure to inform *The Times* that Bulgarian independence would be proclaimed on October 5, 1908. He had therefore collected at Sofia all the evidence available to prove that the proclamation of independence had been a complete surprise, and that there was no inkling of it in Bulgaria before the event.

At the beginning of July, 1909, he passed through Vienna on his way to London, and told me of the results of his enquiries. It had long been my practice to let the British Ambassador know of any interesting or important information I might receive, and in this instance I undoubtedly told Sir Fairfax Cartwright what my colleague had told me. Bouchier's thesis interested him the more in that Sir Fairfax was inclined to believe, mainly on the strength of assurances given him by Aehrenthal, that Aehrenthal had not hed bare-facedly to Sir Edward Goschen, at Budapest on October 3, 1908, in denying all knowledge of an impending proclamation of Bulgarian independence.

On this point I had never shared Sir Fairfax Cartwright's views; though I was prepared to admit—and had, indeed, put this argument forward in a private letter to the Editor of *The Times* on June 21, 1909—that "If Aehrenthal's hand was forced at the last moment by Ferdinand

(1) [*v. supra*, pp. 21-2, No. 20.]

of Bulgaria, Aehrenthal's conduct towards Isvolsky and his official denial to the British Ambassador, on October 3, of all knowledge of the impending proclamation of Bulgarian independence, lose much of their apparent heinousness." The only question was whether Aehrenthal's hand had been forced or not.

My impression then was, and still is, that his hand had not been forced by Prince Ferdinand. In the summer and early autumn of 1908, after the Young Turk Revolution in July, both the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the proclamation of Bulgarian independence were "in the air." At the end of July, 1908, I had been consulted upon the annexation by an influential Austrian official (on behalf of a leading member of the Austrian Government) and had advised against it, at least in the form suggested. On August 15, 1908, at Marienbad, in reply to a question from King Edward, I had said "This country (Austria-Hungary), Sir, is getting ready to annex Bosnia-Herzegovina, and I think we ought soon to make up our minds about it." The King would not believe it because the Emperor Francis Joseph had given him no hint of anything of the kind when they had met, two days before, at Ischl.

On August 25, when I lunched with M. Isvolsky at Carlsbad, he told me that, if Austria-Hungary were to annex Bosnia-Herzegovina, he would regard it as an infraction of the Treaty of Berlin and would make a European question of it. He gave the same assurance to M. Milovanovitch, the Serbian Foreign Minister (who told me) and probably also to King Edward with whom Isvolsky lunched at Marienbad on August 26. But on September 4 Isvolsky told Milovanovitch that Austria-Hungary had decided to annex Bosnia-Herzegovina and that, at the same time, the independence of Bulgaria would be proclaimed. He asked Milovanovitch to suggest "compensations" for Serbia; and having received, on September 10, some suggestions on this score, Isvolsky went, on September 15, to meet Aehrenthal at Buchlau in Moravia, the country seat of Count Berchtold, then Austro-Hungarian Ambassador to St. Petersburg. On September 17, I was informed by a Russian diplomatist who was present at the Buchlau meeting that, contrary to expectation, Isvolsky and Aehrenthal had come to an agreement about Turkey and the Balkans and that Isvolsky had, in fact, agreed "to everything."

After verifying this information in Austro-Hungarian quarters I informed Sir Edward Goschen; and, on September 23, 1908, reported confidentially to *The Times* as follows:—

I hear that Austria-Hungary has given up the idea of ever advancing to Salonica and that, in return for Russian assent to the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, she may perhaps withdraw her garrisons from the Sanjak and abandon the projected Novi Bazar railway. The Emperor Francis Joseph desires the annexation, and Aehrenthal is anxious to carry it out as a kind of jubilee triumph for the Emperor and for himself. It is an open question whether annexation would not lead to a revolt among the Serbs and Muslims of the two provinces. It would certainly irritate the Young Turks and, as it would probably be followed by the proclamation of Bulgarian independence, it might create a very critical situation in the Near East.

I am the more inclined to believe in the existence of an Austro-Russian agreement in regard to Bosnia-Herzegovina, and perhaps also Bulgaria, because of Isvolsky's fear that Aehrenthal, by intriguing with the Russian reactionaries, might succeed in undermining his (Isvolsky's) position.

On September 23 and 24, 1908, Aehrenthal had conversations with Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria at Budapest. Before the end of the month I learned, on excellent Austrian authority, that, politically, the conversations had been satisfactory but that an interview between Prince Ferdinand and the Emperor Francis Joseph had ended in a personal estrangement because the Emperor Francis Joseph had declined to grant Prince Ferdinand's request for the Order of the Golden Fleece, the reason being that Prince Ferdinand's relations with the Vatican were still too strained. According to Aehrenthal's own notes of these conversations with Prince Ferdinand (Austro-Hungarian Diplomatic Documents, No. 87, Vol. I, p. 97) Aehrenthal informed Prince Ferdinand that Austria-Hungary and Russia had agreed at Buchlau upon the main lines of their policy in the Near East and that they would act together. They could not approve of a policy directed against the "actual present possessions of Turkey," though he (Aehrenthal) would not put obstacles in the way of the realisation of any other wishes of the Principality. He could not, however, speak for Isvolsky. Nor could Aehrenthal give Prince Ferdinand definite advice, since Prince Ferdinand knew the interests and wishes of his own country best. He would advise him only to avoid, on the one hand, a policy of adventure which the Powers might not be able to support but, on the other, "to be careful nevertheless not to allow Bulgaria to miss a possibly favourable moment for the fulfilment of her legitimate desires, and not to leave unutilised the superiority which the Bulgarian army would possess in the Balkans as long as its present strength could be kept up. I did not hide from the Prince that our situation in Bosnia and in the Sanjak had also become difficult in consequence of recent events in Turkey, and that we might therefore soon have to take decisions in regard to it."

Aehrenthal's notes bear out the impression which Austrian informants conveyed to me at the time—that Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria were in substantial agreement and would act in concert. Therefore when Sir Edward Goschen informed me, on October 4, 1908, of his interview with Aehrenthal at Budapest on October 3, and said that Aehrenthal had looked "extremely

uncomfortable " and was " obviously lying to him " in denying all knowledge of an impending proclamation of Bulgarian independence, I shared, as I still share, Sir Edward Goschen's view.

So indignant, indeed, was the Ambassador that he twice took occasion to charge Aehrenthal with untruthfulness. His resentment had been increased by the answer reported to have been given by Count Khevenhüller, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Paris, to President Fallières on the afternoon of October 3 in reply to the President's enquiry about Bulgarian independence. " That is all settled, Bulgaria will precede us by one day." On October 8 Sir Edward Goschen protested officially to Aehrenthal, and, in November, at a Court dinner in honour of the King of Greece, an altercation arose between Goschen and Aehrenthal as a result of Aehrenthal's complaint of the unfriendliness of the British press. So fierce was their dispute that the King of Greece intervened to stop it, but not before Goschen had said to Aehrenthal. " Vous, M. le Ministre, n'aimez pas la vérité." This incident was described to me by the Greek Minister in Vienna next day, and Sir Edward Goschen confirmed the accuracy of his description. One result of it was that Aehrenthal omitted to bid farewell to Sir Edward Goschen a few days later when Goschen left Vienna to take up his new post as Ambassador to Berlin.

Sir Fairfax Cartwright, on succeeding Sir Edward Goschen, was naturally anxious to improve the relations between the British Embassy and the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister. Therefore he lent a ready ear to information tending to prove that Aehrenthal's conduct was susceptible of a more favourable interpretation than that which Sir Edward Goschen had placed upon it. In July, 1909, he knew that Aehrenthal hoped to receive the title of Count as a reward for the success of the annexation policy, and in August, 1909, when that title had been conferred upon Aehrenthal in the Emperor Francis Joseph's Birthday Honours list, Sir Fairfax Cartwright suggested that King Edward might improve Anglo-Austrian relations by congratulating Aehrenthal. King Edward did not act upon this advice.

The circumstances I have described account in some measure for Sir Fairfax Cartwright's letter of July 9 to Sir Charles Hardinge, in which the substance of what I had told him of Bourchier's thesis was reproduced. It is possible that, at the last moment, Prince Ferdinand may have been impelled to act more rapidly than had been at first intended. There were, indeed, some haste and confusion in the information officially supplied to the Austro-Hungarian press on the afternoon of Monday, October 5, 1908, when news had been received of the proclamation of Bulgarian independence at Tirnovo early that morning. The Annexation Rescript, dated October 7, was actually published on the morning of Tuesday, October 6.

Sir Fairfax Cartwright's statement to the effect that " copies of the proclamation of the annexation had been printed bearing a date posterior to the 20th October " is not borne out by Aehrenthal's letter to Isvolsky, dated September 30, 1908, in which Aehrenthal informed Isvolsky that the annexation had been fixed for October 7 (*O.-U.A.*, Vol. I, p. 115, No. 103). The Ambassador's statement conflicts also with my own information at the time. In a private report to *The Times*, dated October 9, 1908, I find the following passage.—

As an illustration of Aehrenthal's diplomatic methods you should know that when Goschen asked him officially last Saturday whether there were any truth in the rumours of the impending proclamation of Bulgarian independence, Aehrenthal denied all knowledge of it. Yet on the previous Thursday (October 1) an Austro-Hungarian Ambassador (the late Count Henry Lutzow, then Ambassador to the Quirinal), after seeing Aehrenthal, had called to tell me that the proclamation of Bulgarian independence might be considered certain. Goschen yesterday (October 8) took Aehrenthal sharply to task for lying, but he (Aehrenthal) still stoutly denied having had any previous knowledge of Bulgarian intentions!

Another passage in this same report suggests a different reason for the sudden departure of the Italian Ambassador from Budapest for Rome—to which Sir Fairfax Cartwright's letter refers—on the evening of Friday, October 2. The passage runs—

As to the compensation obtained by Italy for consenting to the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, I believe that, besides promising the abrogation of Article 29 of the Treaty of Berlin, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand has led the Italians to believe that he will visit the King of Italy at Rome. I am investigating this point. Both the Papal Nuncio and the Italian Ambassador started hurriedly for Rome after the Court Ball at Buda on the 2nd inst., in connection with this question.

The mystery of Aehrenthal's official denial to Sir Edward Goschen of all knowledge of an impending proclamation of Bulgarian independence may never be satisfactorily solved. But when I reminded Count Henry Lutzow, some months later, that he had told me, on October 1, that the proclamation of Bulgarian independence might be considered certain, he assured me that, like his colleagues accredited to other great capitals, he had been informed of it by Aehrenthal himself, and that his statement to me was in the nature of a friendly hint not to be caught napping.

In any event, an answer suggests itself to Sir Fairfax Cartwright's question: " What could he (Aehrenthal) gain by doing so (lying to Goschen) except to obtain for himself the damaging reputation of being a barefaced liar or of being an idiot?" Aehrenthal was preparing the greatest stroke of his career. The proclamation of Bulgarian independence was an essential

part of it. Sir Edward Grey's instructions to Sir Edward Goschen on October 2 (*Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, p. 373, No. 278) to inform the Austro-Hungarian Government that the British Government were "much impressed by the current rumours" of an impending proclamation of Bulgarian independence, and that "it seems desirable that the Bulgarian Government should be seriously warned of the gravity of such action" showed Aehrenthal that there was reason to fear a British protest against the Bulgarian side of his policy. Sir Edward Goschen was obliged almost to force himself upon Aehrenthal on October 3 (*Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. V, p. 381, No. 291) in order to communicate to him the substance of Sir Edward Grey's telegram. Aehrenthal, unaware at that moment of the indiscretion committed in Paris by Count Khevenhüller the same afternoon, may have hoped that a denial of all knowledge of Bulgarian independence would gain him a respite over the week end—long enough to enable him and Prince Ferdinand to confront Great Britain and the other Powers with accomplished facts.

Prince Ferdinand was then at Rustchuk, within reach of a telegram. It is a tenable hypothesis that, frightened by Goschen's intervention, and by news of Count Khevenhüller's indiscretion—which appeared in the Paris press on the afternoon of October 3 and will have been known to Aehrenthal that evening—Aehrenthal himself urged prompt action upon Prince Ferdinand. This hypothesis would account for the haste and confusion in Vienna, on the afternoon of Monday October 5, in the official communications to the Austro-Hungarian press, and for the publication on the morning of Tuesday, October 6, of an Imperial Rescript dated October 7. To me the hypothesis that Aehrenthal's hand was forced, not by Prince Ferdinand but by Sir Edward Goschen and Count Khevenhüller, and that Aehrenthal himself then forced Prince Ferdinand's hand, appears the least unlikely. But, in any event, the proclamation would seem only to have been hastened by one day or hardly enough to justify Aehrenthal's statement to Goschen.

WICKHAM STEED.

APPENDIX IV.

Negotiations of Turkey for a Secret Alliance with Great Britain, October–November 1911.

[*ED. NOTE.*—The following documents relating to the Turkish overture to Great Britain of October 31, 1911, were not discovered by the Editors until after the text of the volume was in print. They belong properly to the Chapter on the Tripoli War, and reference is made to them *supra*, p. 317, *Ed. note.*]

Communication from Tewfik Pasha.

F.O. 43250/43250/11/44.

October 31, 1911.

Après un examen minutieux de la situation et de l'état de nos relations présentes et de nos apports passés avec le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique, Son Altesse le Grand-Véizir Saïd Pacha et moi avons acquis la conviction profonde que nos efforts doivent tendre au esserrement, sur une base particulièrement cordiale, des liens qui nous unissent à l'Angleterre. De la réalisation de ce programme, nous nous promettons une ère de prospérité pour l'Empire.

Nous serions donc disposés à entrer en pourparlers pour la conclusion d'une alliance avec la Grande-Bretagne seule, ou à participer éventuellement à l'Entente existant actuellement entre elle et les autres Puissances.

Il convient de relever à cette occasion que les Traités qui garantissent l'intégrité de l'Empire Ottoman et au bas desquels figure la signature de l'Angleterre, ne peuvent pas avoir perdu de leur force, quels que soient les événements survenus et les erreurs commises depuis. Aussi aimons-nous à espérer que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique voudra bien nous prêter son puissant appui en intervenant d'une manière efficace auprès du Gouvernement Italien pour l'amener à accepter une solution équitable à la Tripolitaine-Cyrénaïque, et ceci sur la base du maintien effectif de nos droits de souveraineté sur cette contrée. Nous serions dans ces conditions disposés à assurer à l'Italie tels intérêts économiques et financiers et à lui donner des garanties matérielles qui seraient compatibles avec le principe de la sauvegarde de notre souveraineté, et que le Gouvernement Anglais jugerait opportun de nous conseiller à lui accorder.

Notre reconnaissance pour ce concours bienveillant éclaterait aux yeux de tous et marquerait la nécessité qu'il y a pour l'Empire Ottoman à nouer sans retard avec l'Angleterre des liens d'étroite et d'indissoluble amitié.

Une pareille démarche de la part de Votre Altesse constituera une preuve manifeste de la sincérité des sentiments que nous nourrissons à l'égard de l'Angleterre, et du prix que nous attachons à sa précieuse amitié.

MINUTES.

Sir Edward Grey.

The Turkish Ambassador gave me to-day the appended paper. He said he had been requested to decypher the telegram himself as the matter must be kept most secret. I said the communication was an important one and that I would give it to you. I could say no more.

A. N.

Let me have an English translation to read to the Cabinet to-morrow.

E. G.

31.10.11.

Memoirandum by Sir Edward Grey

F O 43250/43250/11/44.

Foreign Office, November 2, 1911

His Majesty's Government have considered with the care and attention which it merited the communication which was handed in by His Highness the Turkish Ambassador on the 31st ultimo. His Majesty's Government highly appreciate the friendly sentiments which animated and dictated the communication in question, and they fully share the desire of His Highness the Grand Vizier and of His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs that the relations between the two Governments and countries should be sincerely cordial and that the Ottoman Empire should enter upon an era of prosperity and progress.

His Majesty's Government have declared and observed an attitude of strict neutrality in the state of war which has unhappily arisen between the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Italy. This attitude is one from which His Majesty's Government cannot depart during the existence of hostilities, and they are therefore precluded from entering on any negotiations which the Imperial Ottoman Government may wish to initiate for the purpose of investing with a more formal and binding character and of extending to a wider scope the friendly relations happily existing between the Ottoman Empire and this country. His Majesty's Government would be happy as soon as the relations between the two belligerents have been restored to a normal and pacific footing, to discuss and examine with the Imperial Ottoman Government the measures which might be adopted for establishing on a firm and durable basis a thoroughly good understanding between the Ottoman Empire and this country.

His Majesty's Government would be obliged if His Highness the Ambassador would be good enough to bring the above considerations to the knowledge of the Imperial Ottoman Government.

MINUTE BY KING GEORGE.

App[rove]d.—G.R.I.

Minute by Sir A. Nicolson.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 43470/43250/11/44.

Sir Edward Grey,

November 2, 1911.

I gave M. Cambon, for his confidential information, a summary of the proposal which had been made to us by Said Pasha. I did not say that an Alliance had been proposed, but that the Turkish Government had expressed a wish to strengthen and consolidate the existing relations, and had also stated that they would be prepared to revolve eventually within the orbit of the Triple Entente if so desired. The Turkish Government at the same time had suggested that we should effectively intervene at Rome with the object of inducing Italy to accept an arrangement on the basis of a recognition of the sovereign rights of the Sultan over Tripoli.

I gave M. Cambon the substance of the reply which we were about to make to the communication of Said Pasha.

M. Cambon thanked me for the information which he described as interesting—and which he thought seemed to derive its inspiration from what M. Tchaykoff had recently been saying at Constantinople.

A. N.

E. G.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

F.O. 45508/43250/11/40.

(No. 286. Most Secret.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 3, 1911.

I told Count Benckendorff to-day of the nature of the Turkish overture to us in favour of strengthening the good relations with us and eventually with Russia and France, and of the reply which we had made (see my despatch No. 285 of November 2nd).

⁽¹⁾ [A note on this paper states that Sir F. Bertie was informed privately on November 4 1911.]

I said that one of the reasons why we had made our reply so civil was that we did not wish to discourage the overtures that Russia might be making for a better understanding with Turkey. The Turkish overture to us contemplated, as an outcome of it, closer relations with both Russia and France. We had made our reply very civil, so as not to impair the prospect of these closer relations.

I am, &c
E. GREY.

APPENDIX V.

[*ED. NOTE*—A summary of the text of the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty is given *supra*, pp. 557-8, No. 559, *encl*. This should be compared with the full text printed below.]

Treaty of Friendship and Alliance between the Kingdom of Bulgaria and the Kingdom of Serbia, February 29, 1912.⁽¹⁾

His Majesty Ferdinand I, Tsar of the Bulgarians, and His Majesty Peter I, King of Serbia, being firmly convinced of the unity of interests and the identity of fate of their States and of the two kindred nations, the Bulgarian and Serbian, are determined to defend those interests with united force and to work for their general advancement, have agreed upon the following

Article 1.—The kingdom of Bulgaria and the kingdom of Serbia guarantee to each other their national independence and the integrity of their national territories, binding themselves absolutely and without reservation to succour each other with their entire forces, in the event of one of them being attacked by one or more States.

Article 2.—The two contracting parties also undertake to come to each other's assistance with all their forces in the event of any Great Power attempting to annex, occupy, or even temporarily to invade with its armies any part of the Balkan territories which are to-day under Turkish rule, if one of the parties should consider this as contrary to its vital interests and a *casus belli*.

Article 3.—The two contracting parties bind themselves not to conclude peace except jointly and after a preliminary understanding.

Article 4.—For the complete and most appropriate application of this treaty, a military convention will be concluded which will provide minutely for everything that may have to be undertaken by either side in the event of a war, or that appertains to the military organisation, disposition, or mobilisation of the armies and the relations between the higher commands which must be settled in time of peace, as a preparation for war and its successful prosecution. The military convention will form an integral part of the present treaty. Its formulation must begin at the latest fifteen days after the signature of the present treaty, and the convention must be ready within a maximum period of two months.

Article 5.—This treaty and the military convention will remain in force from the day of their signature to December 31, 1920 (old style), inclusive. They can be prolonged after that date through an additional understanding, explicitly ratified by the two parties. If, on the day when the treaty and the convention expire, the contracting parties should be engaged in war, or should not yet have wound up the situation arising from a war, the treaty and convention will retain their force until the conclusion of peace, or until the situation resulting from a war has been definitely settled.

Article 6.—The treaty will be signed in two identical copies, both of them in Bulgarian and Serbian. They will be signed by the two Rulers and their Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The military convention, also in two copies, both of them in Bulgarian and Serbian, will be signed by the Rulers, the respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and by special military plenipotentiaries.

Article 7.—The treaty and the convention may be published, or communicated to other States, only after a preliminary agreement between the two contracting parties, and even then only jointly and simultaneously by the two sides.

In the same way, a third party may be permitted to join the alliance after a preliminary understanding between the two parties.

Made in Sofia, on February 29, 1912 (old style).

IV. EV. GUESHOFF.
I. MILOVANOVITCH.

Secret Annex to the Treaty of Friendship and Alliance between the Kingdom of Bulgaria and the Kingdom of Serbia.

Article 1.—In the event of internal troubles arising in Turkey which might endanger the State or the national interests of the contracting parties, or of either of them; or in the event of internal or external difficulties of Turkey raising the question of the maintenance of the

⁽¹⁾ [I. E. Guéshov : *The Balkan League*, pp. 112-7, App.]

status quo in the Balkan Peninsula, that contracting party which first arrives at the conclusion that in consequence of all this military action has become indispensable must make a reasoned proposal to the other party, which is bound immediately to enter into an exchange of views and, in the event of disagreement, must give to the proposing party a reasoned reply.

Should an agreement favourable to action be reached, it will be communicated to Russia, and if the latter Power is not opposed to it, military operations will begin as previously arranged, the parties being guided in everything by the sentiment of solidarity and community of their interests. In the opposite case, when no agreement has been reached, the parties will appeal to the opinion of Russia, which opinion, if and in so far as Russia pronounces herself, will be binding on both parties.

If, Russia declining to state an opinion and the parties failing to agree, the party in favour of action should on its own responsibility open war on Turkey, the other contracting party is bound to observe towards its ally a friendly neutrality, ordering at once a mobilisation in the limits fixed by the military convention, and coming to its assistance in the event of any third party taking the side of Turkey.

Article 2—All territorial gains acquired by combined action within the scope of articles 1 and 2 of the treaty, and of article 1 of this secret annex, shall constitute common property (condominium) of the two allies, and their repartition will take place immediately or, at the latest, within a period of three months after the restoration of peace, the following principles having been observed.

Serbia recognises the right of Bulgaria to the territory east of the Rhodope Mountains and the River Strouma; while Bulgaria recognises a similar right of Serbia to the territory north and west of Shar Mountain.

As regards the territory lying between Shar Mountain and the Rhodope Mountains, the Archipelago and the Lake of Ochrida, if the two parties should become convinced that the organisation of this territory into an autonomous province is impossible, in view of the common interests of the Bulgarian and Serbian nationalities, or owing to other internal and external causes, in such a case the said territory will be disposed of in accordance with the following declarations. Serbia undertakes to ask for nothing beyond a line, drawn on the accompanying map, which starts from the Turco-Bulgarian frontier, at Mount Golem (north of Kiiva Palanka), and follows a general south-western direction to the Lake of Ochrida, passing through Mount Kitka, between the villages of Metchevo and Podarykon, through the heights to the east of the village of Nerav, along the watershed to the height of 1,000, north of the village Bashtevo, between the villages of Lubentzi and Potarlitz, through the height Ostricht 1,000 (Lissetz Mountain), the height 1,050, the height 1,000, through the village Kashi, along the main watershed, Gradishte Mountain to the height Gorishte, towards the height 1,023, along the watershed between the villages of Ivankovtzi and Logintzi, through Vetersko and Sopot on the Vardar; then across the Vardar, along the mountain ridge towards the height 2,550, as far as Peropole Mountain, along its watershed between the villages of Krapa and Barbare to the height of 1,200, between the villages of Ekenovo and Drenovo, to the height Tcherna (1,254), along the watershed of Baba Mountain and Kroushka Tepessi, between the villages of Salp and Tzersko, to the height Protoiska Mountain, east of the village of Belitza, through Brejani to the height 1,200 (Iluska Mountain), along the watershed through the height 1,330, to the height 1,217 and between the villages of Livishta and Gorentzi to the Lake of Ochrida, near the monastery of Gabovtzi. Bulgaria undertakes to accept this line, if His Majesty the Russian Emperor, who will be requested to act as supreme arbitrator, pronounces in its favour. It is understood that the two parties bind themselves to accept as a definite frontier the line between the indicated frontiers which His Majesty the Russian Emperor will esteem to correspond best to the rights and the interests of the two parties.

Article 3.—A copy of the treaty and of the secret annex, as also of the military convention, will be jointly communicated to the Russian Government, which will be asked to take note of them, to show itself benevolent towards their aims, and to request His Majesty the Russian Emperor to accept and sanction the parts reserved by the treaty for His Majesty and the Imperial Government.

Article 4.—All disputes concerning the interpretation and the execution of any part of this treaty, of its secret annex, and of the military convention will be submitted to the final decision of Russia, as soon as one of the contracting parties declares that, in its opinion, an agreement by direct negotiation is impossible.

Article 5.—No disposition of the present secret annex shall be made public, or communicated to another State, without the previous consent of the two parties and the permission of Russia.

Made in Sofia, on February 29, 1912 (old style).

IV. EV GUESHOFF
M. MILOVANOVITCH.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir A. Nicolson

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Vienna, March 27, 1912

I have received your private and secret letter of the 18th inst[ant]⁽²⁾ in which you give me the startling piece of information that Bulgaria and Serbia have concluded a kind of defensive alliance against any possible attacks from any third Power on Turkish territory in Europe. If the object of this Treaty is to protect Serbia or the Sanjak of Novi Bazar from being occupied by Austria it seems to me inexplicable why Bulgaria should take the lead in this matter as it is a question which does not directly affect Bulgarian interests. You say in your letter that the supposed Treaty has been concluded under the auspices of the Russian Government. Is it not possible that it has been concluded under Teliavsky's personal inspiration for he is a well known advocate of the creation of a Balkan League and of a "politique de phrases" for Serbia—in other words—pan Slavist brotherhood?

What they will think here in Vienna of this Treaty when it becomes known at the Ballplatz it is not easy to say. If Aehrenthal were alive I think he would act something as follows—He would remain perfectly calm and treat the matter as one of not very serious consequence for he would be perfectly well aware that King Ferdinand would not waste his army in the vain attempt to prevent Austria-Hungary from re-occupying the Sanjak in the event of a breakdown of Turkish rule in Europe. If Austria ever reoccupies that province it will be as a consequence of a collapse at Constantinople and if a collapse takes place in that part of the World King Ferdinand will be fully occupied in attempting to carve out for himself a large slice of Macedonia. Serbia would then be left to her fate as every Bulgarian soldier would be engaged fighting the Turks. Aehrenthal, on hearing of this secret Treaty, would probably have made the King understand that he had committed a great mistake and as a punishment would have set to work to bring about strained relations between Roumania and Bulgaria—a thing which it was always easy for him to do. I do not think if Aehrenthal were alive he would have allowed his determination to try and cultivate good relations with Russia to be affected by a Treaty of this kind which can have no serious effect upon the real situation in the Balkans. Whether Count Berchtold will act in the same way when he learns of the existence of this Treaty I cannot say. Much will depend on how far he believes that the Russian Government are at the back of this evidently anti-Austrian action. I hope he will behave with moderation and not lose his head and act as Aehrenthal would have done under the same circumstances, namely—be satisfied with giving King Ferdinand a good snub which would very shortly have had the effect of bringing His Majesty to Vienna in a penitent mood.

The King of Bulgaria was in Vienna in the early days of December and he then saw Aehrenthal. I questioned the latter a few days later with regard to the reported negotiations going on between Sofia and Belgrade and he seemed to me to be not the least alarmed concerning them. In fact from hints dropped by him at that time he left me under the impression that whatever King Ferdinand did he—Aehrenthal—had obtained guarantees from that Sovereign that any arrangement arrived at with Serbia would not really menace Austrian interests in the Balkans, and would only be intended as a sop to Russia. I have recently tried to obtain confidential information as to what is thought at the Ballplatz as to present relations between Bulgaria and Serbia. All my sources of information agree that the Austro-Hungarian Government are aware that a kind of flirtation has been going on for some time past between Sofia and Belgrade and that while they are watching it closely remain perfectly calm with regard to its ultimate results. This flirtation appears, as far as I can judge, to have no effect whatever on the determination which exists here to do everything possible to come to an understanding with Russia as to Balkan matters. Swetchine, the newly appointed Minister at the Hague, who was recently here and who has been sent back to Constantinople to take charge of the Russian Embassy during the change of Ambassadors told me, before I received your letter, that although he was personally a friend of Teliavsky he entirely condemned his policy of trying to group the Balkan States together into a federation under the protectorate of Turkey with a point against Austria. For Swetchine it was no use hiding the fact that the only thing which would unite the little Balkan States was a common desire on their part for attacking Turkey at the first opportunity, and as for negotiations between Sofia and Belgrade the Russian Diplomatist treated them with ridicule declaring to me that King Ferdinand "n'attachera jamais un boulet comme la Serbie à son pied." Milovanovitch, the Serbian Premier, has more than once said to me that the only thing which would unite the Balkan States would be a common desire for attacking Turkey.

Dard, who has just returned to Vienna after having been in charge of the French Legation in Sofia, tells me that he learnt on good authority that King Ferdinand had said that if the Italian Fleet succeeded in passing the Dardanelles and came to Constantinople Bulgaria would not move. If on the other hand the presence of the Italian Fleet off Constantinople should produce a collapse of the present Turkish Régime nothing would prevent King Ferdinand from throwing

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS., Vol. II of 1912.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 558-9, No. 560.]

himself upon the Turks. If this is true it does not look as if King Ferdinand was meditating taking offensive measures against Austria but rather that he is reserving his strength for the struggle with Turkey.

That the official relations between Vienna and Sofia are good is shown by the fact that I lean through one of his A[ide] D[e] C[amp]s that the Archduke Stephen has been invited by King Ferdinand to visit Sofia in the month of July and that he has accepted the invitation. Evidently the Austro-Hungarian Government have no knowledge of the secret Treaty, or if it has, attaches very little importance to it—otherwise the Archduke would not have received permission to accept the invitation from the King.

Yours truly,
FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

APPENDIX VI

Bibliographical Note on the Balkan League and the Balkan War in relation to Macedonia and Albania.

[The Editors have felt it impossible to insert in the text detailed references to the literature of this period. The following works, representing different views on the disputed Macedonian question and the points connected with it, will be found instructive and typical, though forming only a fragment of the literature on the subject. Reference to Dr. Baernreither's work is made *supra*, p. 499, No 516, note (3).]

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[ED. NOTE—The following statement by Herr Sigmund Münz has reference to the documents published in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. VII, pp. 837–46, App. V. *cp.* also the reference by the Editors to this subject in *ib.*, Vol. VIII, p. 795, *Ed. note*; and *supra*, p. viii.]

Meine Entgegnung auf die Berichte des Wiener Botschafters Sir Fairfax Cartwright aus dem Jahre 1911.

(Von Sigmund Münz)

Die auf die Agadir-Krise des Sommers 1911 bezüglichen Berichte des Wiener Botschafters Sir Fairfax Cartwright an das Foreign Office enthalten so viele Unrichtigkeiten und Unwahrheiten, die meine Person betreffen, dass sie unmöglich unwiderlegt bleiben können. Eigentlich sind sie bereits von drei Seiten widerlegt worden: zunächst von mir selbst, ohne dass ich sie damals überhaupt noch authentisch kannte, sondern nur aus den in dem grossen deutschen Documentenwerk niedergelegten Berichten des deutschen Botschafters in London, Grafen Wolff-Metternich, beruhend auf der durch das Foreign Office ihm gewordenen Kunde. Diese meine Rechenschaft über die wirklichen Tatsachen war im März 1930 unter dem Titel "The Cartwright Interview, August 1911" in der "Contemporary Review" erschienen. Eine zweite Widerlegung findet sich in der vor einiger Zeit im "Quaderverlag" in Berlin veröffentlichten Brochure des Münchner Gelehrten Hermann Lutz: "Deutschfeindliche Kulte im Foreign Office der Vorkriegszeit—Materialien zu Band VII der "Britischen Documente" (pag. 21 bis 43: Der Fall Cartwright) und eine dritte Widerlegung sollte eigentlich als erste anzuführen sein, insofern der Urheber jener Berichte, Cartwright selbst, was er über mich zwei Jahre früher an das Foreign Office mitgeteilt hatte, gegenüber jenem Publizisten widerrief, der ihm während seiner Wiener Botschafterjahre näher stand als irgend ein österreichischer Publizist. Dies war Dr. Julius Szeps, ein Mann, den auch Cartwrights Intimus, der Wiener französische Botschafter Crozier, sehr hoch einschätzte, indem er in der "Revue de France" (Mai 1921) schrieb: "Un ami commun, excellent Autrichien, mais bon Européen, le Docteur Szeps, directeur du 'Freundenblatt'."

Unter dem Titel "Der originellste Botschafter am Wiener Hofe" entwarf Dr. Szeps am 19. August 1923 im "Neuen Wiener Journal" ein vortreffliches Portrait des englischen Diplomaten. Dieser, Chef-redacteur des Organs des Ballplatzes, war ein Habitué der englischen Botschaft. Den Artikel über Cartwright publicierte er noch fünf Jahre vor dessen Tod, und er schickte ihn dem ihm befreundeten ehemaligen Botschafter nach dessen Ruhesitze in England ein, und dieser wusste ihm Dank dafür. Szeps spricht von den Beziehungen zwischen dem Minister Aehrenthal und dem britischen Botschafter, die recht freundlicher Natur gewesen seien, "bis in der 'Neuen Freien Presse' ein Interview mit Sir Fairfax aus Marienbad erschien, in dem dieser mit unerhörter Offenheit seinen Gefühlen Ausdruck gab. Es stellte sich zwar heraus, dass diese Unterredung gegen den Willen und ohne Wissen, sowohl des Botschafters als auch des Schriftstellers—es war dies Dr. Sigmund Münz—in einer Form veröffentlicht worden war, die es unmöglich machte die Persönlichkeit des Interviewten—sein Name war nicht ausdrücklich genannt—zu verkennen. Cartwright überzeugte sich auch von der tadellosen Loyalität des Dr. Münz, dessen Vertrauenswürdigkeit im ganzen diplomatischen Corps geschätzt wurde, aber das Geschehene war nicht mehr gut zu machen." Hier also bestätigte Szeps, dass Sir Fairfax meine Loyalität anerkannte, in Vertraulichkeit damit, dass ich persönlich den Artikel nicht in der Form, in der er erschien, in die Öffentlichkeit gebracht wissen wollte. Wohl wünschte ich ihn, so wie ich ihn niedergeschrieben, erscheinen zu sehen, aber ohne jedes einleitende Wort, aus dem auf die Person des Diplomaten und den Ort der Begegnung geschlossen werden konnte. Dass durch die den Artikel indiseret einleitende Bemerkung auf Sir Fairfax als auf den Urheber der Unterredung hingewiesen wurde, tat mir für den Botschafter im Herzen weh.

Die Unrichtigkeiten in Cartwrights Berichten führe ich auf zweierlei zurück. Erstens: auf den durchaus paralytischen Zustand, in dem der Botschafter sich befand, gesteigert durch die Aufregung, die ihm das Erscheinen des Interviews in der "Neuen Freien Presse" bereitete. Zweitens: der Umstand, dass er einen als durchaus unzuverlässig erkannten deutschen Privatsecretar sich hielt, der für den halbblinden Mann deutsche Zeitungen excerpierte und, wie dies aus Lutz' Schrift hervorgeht,—wo allerdings Cartwright selbst als der Alleinschuldige erscheint—auch nicht selten als Uebersetzer falschte. Schon dieser Privatsecretar erlag oft den Mitteilungen und Eingebungen kleiner Reporters, die ihm manche verlogenen Pikanterien zutrug. Bei der körperlichen Verfassung Cartwrights war jedes besonnene Kriterium für einige Zeit in den Hintergrund getreten, und so nahm er, von Bericht zu Bericht notlugend und sich selbst widerlegend, die unsinnigsten Mitteilungen entgegen, um sie weiterzugeben. So viele Torheit aber ich auch schon in den Berichten Cartwrights über mich aufgestapelt finde, so dass der ernste und verantwortungsvolle Publizist in mir geradezu in einen Gassenbuben verwandelt scheint, so war es dem Botschafter Crozier, der mit dem britischen Collegen oder vielmehr als alter Jungeselle mit dem britischen Botschafterpaar wie verwachsen schien, vorbehalten das Allerdümmste, Allerlächerlichste und Allerunwahrste seinen Lesern mitzuteilen. In der oben genannten "Revue de France" (Juni 1921) schreibt Crozier: "pour donner un cachet d'authenticité à ces lignes

sensationnelles, on avait pris soin de faire remettre en vente un cliché instantané qui montrait Sir Fairfax parlant avec le docteur Munz sur la promenade à Marienbad. Il est vrai que la photographie n'était pas un truquage,—mais on n'avait pas mentionné qu'elle avait été prise deux ans auparavant;—au bureau de la presse à Vienne on en conservait des épreuves dans les archives."

Die Wahrheit ist, dass während ich damals in Marienbad zwischen "Kirchenplatz" und "Hotel Klinger" mit Cartwright während unserer Promenade plauderte, ein Photograph uns "knipste," der dann unser Bild ins Schaufenster zum Verkauf stellte. So etwas ereignete sich dort jeden Tag. Durch unseren häufigen Aufenthalt in Marienbad waren der Botschafter sowohl wie ich selbst dem Photographen wohl bekannt. Uebrigens erinnere ich mich, wenn ich es auch keineswegs beedigen will, dass Henry Wickham Steed mir später erzählte, er hatte mich mit dem Botschafter aus einiger Entfernung bemerkt und ebenso den Photographen uns konfeiteien gesehen. Ich habe keinen andern Ausdruck als "lappisch" wenn Crozier, dem Ansturm verlogener Reporter nicht standhaltend, erzählt, dass die Photographie, zwei Jahre früher angefertigt, im Archiv der "Neuen Freien Presse" aufbewahrt worden wäre. Meines Wissens verfügte diese Zeitung weder damals noch heute über irgend etwas, was auch nur im entferntesten einem Archiv ähnlich sahe.

Derselbe Crozier trägt auch in eine mit ihm stattgefundene Unterhaltung manches hinein, was nicht darin stand. So verfälscht er eine auf den Pariser deutschen Botschafter von Schoen bezügliche Stelle, wenn er sie als für diesen beleidigend bezeichnet. Die Stelle lautet:

"In Paris hat man den Eindruck, als ob der dortige Botschafter von Schoen nicht mit jener Autorität vorgehen könne, mit der Cambon in Berlin waltet. Er hat der französischen Regierung gegenüber manches zu optimistisch und zu leicht dargestellt, was dann von der Berliner Regierung verleugnet wurde. Er scheint zuweilen ausgeschaltet, während Cambon das ganze Gewicht seiner Regierung in die Wagschale wirft. Diese minderwertige Rolle von Schoens erschwert auch die Verhandlungen."

Kein nüchterner Leser wird diese Stelle anders als dahin deuten, dass der französische Botschafter mir gegenüber seinem Bedauern Ausdruck gab, wenn die deutsche Reichsregierung Herrn von Schoen nicht mit der gleichen Kompetenz und Autorität für Paris ausstattete wie die französische Regierung den Monsieur Jules Cambon für Berlin. Und Cartwright redete es seinem Collegen Crozier nach, dass in meinem Berichte über meine Unterhaltung mit Crozier eine Beschimpfung von dessen altem Freunde von Schoen enthalten gewesen sei.

Wenn ich im Einzelnen Appendix V, pag 837-845 des siebenten Bandes der "British Documents" durchgehe, so sind alle diese neun Seiten mit Unwahrheiten Cartwrights gespickt. Schon in seiner ersten confidentiellen Mitteilung an Sir Edward Grey findet sich eine dicke Lüge, die mancher heute noch lebende leicht zu widerlegen vermag. Da heisst es "Dr. Munz who is deaf." Dies gilt aber nicht einmal für heute, also mehr als zwanzig Jahre nach jenem Augusttage 1911, und galt noch weniger für damals, was wohl Dr. Gooch selbst, Henry W. Steed, Sir Odo Russell und andere bezeugen konnten. Und so steht es mit einer Menge anderer Behauptungen. Dass ich Cartwright, dem ich in Marienbad vielmehr zufällig begegnete, um ein Interview gebeten, dass ich irgend jemandem erzählt hatte, der in der "Neuen Freien Presse" erschienene Artikel wäre ein Conglomerat von allerhand Meinungen gewesen, die ich aus mancherlei Munde gehört und zu einer einzigen angeblichen Meinungsäusserung des Botschafters comprimiert hatte. Ebenso unwahr, dass ich etwas, was ich von Steed gehört hatte, Cartwright in den Mund legte. Nicht minder unwahr, dass ich mit der deutschen Botschaft in Wien conspiriert hatte. Der Botschafter selbst, von Tschurschky, war auf Urlaub, und den Geschäftsträger sah ich während des Sommers nicht, da ich seit Wochen bereits von Wien fern war, zuerst mehrere Wochen in Baden-Baden und dann in Marienbad. Also ebenso unwahr, dass ich von der "Neuen Freien Presse" nach Marienbad geschickt worden wäre Cartwright zu interviewen. Vielmehr begegnete ich diesem zufällig am Morgen, und was er mir mitteilte—und nur er mir mitteilte—gab ich wieder in jenem anonymen Artikel, zu keinem anderen Zwecke als das deutsche Volk aufmerksam zu machen auf drohende Kriegsgefahr und drohendes Zusammengehen Englands mit Frankreich für den Fall, dass Deutschland in seinen Ansprüchen auf anderweitige coloniale Entschädigung in Afrika für Verzicht auf Marokko zu weit gehen würde. Ich musste ja damals eingeweihter als irgend ein Engländer in die Intentionen der britischen Regierung gewesen sein, hatte ich all das erfunden. Im Foreign Office gab man selber zu, dass trotz allem Leugnen seitens Cartwrights der Artikel der "Neuen Freien Presse" fundiert gewesen sei durch glänzende Informiertheit. Diese Informiertheit will ich aufs entschiedenste mir selbst, doch keineswegs dem Sir Fairfax abgesprochen haben. Nur, dass die "Neue Freie Presse" ganz gegen meinen Auftrag habe erraten lassen, wer der englische Diplomat gewesen sei, der mich unterrichtete, beklagte ich in einem Briefe an Sir Fairfax, aber mit keinem Worte widerrief ich auch nur eine einzige Silbe des Artikels. Dickste Unwahrheit auch, dass die deutsche Botschaft in Wien oder der Botschafter selbst irgend einen Einfluss auf Zeit und Form der Publication genommen hatte. Alles glatte Erfindung kleiner Reporter, die das geneigte Ohr des deutschen Privatsecretars des britischen Botschafters, des Herrn Buchmann, und nicht minder des französischen Botschafters Crozier und somit auch des englischen Botschafters selbst fanden. Ebenso unwahr die Mitteilung, dass mir infolge des Zwischenfalles alle Botschaften in Wien verschlossen worden seien. Ganz im

Gegenteil Viele der Wiener Diplomaten fanden sich bei mir ein, um Authentisches aus meinem Munde zu hören, da sie keinen Zweifel in etwaige Behauptungen von mir setzten. Zu meinem Bedauern musste ich aber im Interesse des englischen Botschafters, der so durch eine an ihm begangene Indiscretion in eine schiefe Lage gebracht worden war, mit meiner Kenntnis der Angelegenheit zurückhalten und den Botschafter wenigstens nach aussen hin decken. Ich glaube annehmen zu sollen, dass Mr. Henry Wickham Steed, damals Times-Correspondent in Wien, über den wahren Sachverhalt unterrichtet sein musste und nicht minder vielleicht Sir Odo Russell, damals Botschaftsrat in Wien. Wenn Cartwright in einem Privatbriefe an Grey seine mannigfachen Unwahrheiten rechtfertigen zu sollen glaubt durch ein von mir an die "Vossische Zeitung" in Berlin gerichtetes Schreiben, in dem ich den Botschafter zu decken versuchte, so vergisst er zu sagen, dass dieses in höchst diplomatischer Form abgefasst war, um gewisse nachträgliche unvorsichtige Aeusserungen des Botschafters selbst in dessen Interesse wieder gut zu machen und ihn selbst zu schützen, dadurch dass ich mancherlei umschrieb, ohne aber irgendeine Unwahrheit zu sagen. Bezeichnend ist es, dass Cartwright erst zehn Wochen nach der Marienbader Begegnung zum ersten Mal auf dieses Detail des ihm im Manuscript bereits zu Anfang September von mir unterbreiteten Briefes an die "Vossische Zeitung" zurückkam.

Also ein unglücklicher, schwermkranker Botschafter, bedient als Halbgelahrter und Halbblinder von einem unverlässlichen deutschen Privatsecretar—dies erklärt einermassen alles.

SIGMUND MÜNZ

Wien, im Februar 1933.

APPENDIX VIII.

Letter from Lord Grey on Belgium.

Extract from the Times of November 21, 1932.

Sir,—A highly summarized version which has appeared in some newspapers of the section on Belgian neutrality in the recently published volume of British Documents has made it appear that I took a cynical view of British obligations in regard to Belgian neutrality. This was never the case.

On November 15, 1908, nearly six years before the War, the late Sir Eyre Crowe prepared a "memorandum" on "Belgian neutrality and Great Britain's obligation to defend it," setting out fully and fairly the legal aspects of the case and coming to the conclusion that—

Great Britain is liable for the maintenance of Belgian neutrality whenever either Belgium or any of the guaranteeing Powers are in need of and demand assistance in opposing its violation.

To this Lord (then Sir Charles) Hardinge appended a minute.—

The liability undoubtedly exists as stated above, but whether we could be called upon to carry out our obligation and to vindicate the neutrality of Belgium in opposing its violation must necessarily depend upon our policy at the time and the circumstances of the moment. Supposing that France violated the neutrality of Belgium in a war against Germany, it is in present circumstances doubtful whether England or Russia would move a finger to maintain Belgian neutrality, while if the neutrality of Belgium were violated by Germany it is probable that the converse would be the case.

To this I added a note:—

I am much obliged for this useful minute. I think it sums up the situation very well, though Sir C. Hardinge's reflection is also to the point.

It is suggested that in using the word "minute" I was referring entirely to Sir Charles Hardinge's "minute." The context shows that the first part of what I wrote referred to Sir Eyre Crowe's "memorandum," which was the substantial document before me and which "summed up the situation very well." Substantially it contains the argument which governed the situation in August, 1914.

Sir Charles Hardinge's "reflection" was, however, to the point. In the year 1908, when the subject was still remote, we had to consider all hypotheses and possible contingencies. The General Staffs of all the Powers were in the habit of formulating hypothetical schemes of strategy, taking military tactics alone into account, and leaving their Governments to decide whether treaty rights or other considerations might prevent their adoption. The hypothesis suggested by Sir Charles Hardinge could not be excluded, and undoubtedly, if it had come to pass, it would have placed a British Government in a position of the greatest difficulty and

embarrassment We desired, therefore, to prevent any violation of Belgian neutrality, and for this we worked continuously during the subsequent years. There is a minute of my own on November 2, 1912, in which I stated plainly :—

We shall not violate Belgian neutrality unless a Power with whom we are at war violates it first, and if the object of an increase of the Belgian Army is to resist violation of its neutrality we shall welcome the increase.

In a dispatch to Sir F. Villiers, then Minister at Brussels, on April 7, 1913, reporting a conversation I had with the Belgian Minister the previous day, I said :—

The Belgian Minister informed me that there had been talk, in a British source which he could not name, of the landing of troops in Belgium by Great Britain, in order to anticipate a possible dispatch of German troops through Belgium to France.

I said that I was sure that this Government would not be the first to violate the neutrality of Belgium, and I did not believe that any British Government would be the first to do so; nor would public opinion here ever approve of it. What we had to consider, and it was a somewhat embarrassing question, was what it would be desirable and necessary for us, as one of the guarantors of Belgian neutrality, to do if Belgian neutrality was violated by any Power. For us to be the first to violate it and to send troops into Belgium would be to give Germany, for instance, justification for sending troops into Belgium also. What we desired in the case of Belgium, as in that of other neutral countries, was that their neutrality should be respected, and as long as it was not violated by any other Power we should certainly not send troops ourselves into their territory.

This was the attitude from which we never deviated.

I am told that the Memoirs of General Joffre, which have just been published in Paris, show that the French General Staff—not the French Government—had various hypothetical schemes, one of which would have involved the invasion of Belgium in anticipation of a German invasion, but that this was definitely abandoned in deference to warnings that it would alienate Great Britain. This leaves no doubt whatever of the serious view taken of the obligation to defend Belgian neutrality and of our determination not to countenance a violation of it.

May I add that it seems to me very undesirable to publish the minutes and memoranda of permanent officials in Government Departments? They are not authoritative documents. The writers of them have no responsibility for ultimate decisions and policy. If they are to be published the prospect of their publication will hamper the freedom of permanent officials in expressing their views to the Ministers who are at the head of their Departments. This would not be in the public interest.

Some time ago I was asked whether I had any objection to the publication of the memorandum by Sir Eyre Crowe (not the one here referred to) written in the Foreign Office while I was Secretary of State. I felt strong objection to this as a precedent, but the memorandum was very creditable to Sir Eyre Crowe, and to keep it from publication would have deprived his memory of credit due to it. I therefore raised no objection, but I think, in the public interest, that such publications should be exceptional. I have no desire that anything which explains or elucidates British policy before the War should be withheld. I left all my private papers and letters relating to Foreign Office business at the Foreign Office, and have allowed them to be investigated without making any inquiry as to what use it was proposed to make of them. But to treat minutes and memoranda of permanent officials as things to be made public is not necessarily in the public interest.⁽¹⁾

Yours truly,
GREY OF FALLODON.

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⁽¹⁾ [The Editors addressed a letter to the *Times* in reply to this under date of November 21, 1932, but this merely stated the Editorial policy, which is described *supra*, p. ix.]

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ATHANASSOV, M. Secretary of Bulgarian Legation at Cetinje, 1911
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AVERESCU, GENERAL A, Rumanian Minister for War, 1907-9, Chief of the General Staff, 1911-3
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BAERNREITHER, DR, Member of the Austrian Upper House
499 (No 516), 503 (No 519)

BARCLAY, MR. C A. DE R, 2nd Secretary at British Embassy at Paris, 1900-4; at Rio de Janeiro, 1904-6, 1st Secretary at British Legation at Bucharest, 1907-8 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*), at Sofia, 1908, at Bucharest, 1908, at Belgrade, 1910, 11, 12, at Sofia, 1912; at Bucharest, 1913, Counsellor of Embassy at Washington, 1913-9 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*)

To Sir E Grey, 189-90 (No 164), 232-7 (Nos 201-3), 248-50 (No 210), 256-7 (No 217), 449-50 (No 469), 523-4 (No 533), 533-4 (No 540), 538-9 (No 545), 542-3 (No 550), 552-4 (No 556), 563 (No 565), 569 (No 571), 570-1 (No 574), 572-3 (No 577), 585-7 (No 589), 598-9 (No 602), 601-2 (No 605), 603-4 (No 607), 608 (No 612), 609-11 (Nos 614-5), 620 (No 624), 624-5 (Nos 633-4), 642-3 (No 653), 646 (No 662), 650-2 (No 668), 656-8 (Nos 674-7), 665 (No 688), 677-9 (No 702), 683-5 (No 711), 692 (No 720), 696-7 (Nos 723-4), 701-2 (Nos 732-3), 705-6 (No 737), 709-10 (No 742), 716-7 (No 749), 718 (No 752), 721 (Nos 758-9), 726 (No 768), 727-8 (Nos 771-2), 729-30 (No 774)
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BARCLAY, SIR G. H, British Minister at Tehran, 1908-12, at Bucharest, 1912-8
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BAROLI, SIGNOR, Italian Minister at Belgrade, 1908-12.
Conversation with M Milovanović, 451 (No 470)
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BARRERE, M C, French Ambassador at Rome, 1897-1924
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BAX-IRONSIDE, MR (since 1911, SIR) H G O, British Minister at Berne, 1909-11, at Sofia, 1911-5

To Sir E Grey, 27-8 (No 24), 295 (No 262), 311 (No 288), 360 (No 359), 456-7 (No. 474), 466-7 (No 483), 484-5 (No 505), 490-3 (Nos 509-10), 497-9 (No 515), 501-3 (Nos 517-8), 506-7 (No 521), 508-11 (No 523), 514-6 (Nos 526-7), 524-6 (No 534), 529-32 (No 539), 550-1 (No 554), 566-7 (No 568)

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To Sir A. Nicolson, 513-4 (No 525), 536-8 (Nos 543-4), 551-2 (No 555), 556 (No 558), 556-8 (No 559), 563-6 (Nos 566-7), 569-70 (No 572)

BEAUMONT, MR H H D, Counsellor of Embassy at British Embassy at Cettinje, 1909-10 (*Chargé d'Affaires*): 1st Secretary at Athens, 1910-4 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*), Counsellor of Embassy at Constantinople, 1914 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*)

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BENCKENDORFF, ALEXANDER, COUNT, Russian Ambassador at London, 1903-17

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BERCHTOLD, LEOPOLD, COUNT VON, Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at St Petersburg, 1906-11; Minister for Foreign Affairs, February 19, 1912-5

Conversation with Sir F Cartwright, 400 (No 412), 426 (No. 449), 554 (No 557), 570 (No 573), 655-6 (No 672), 689 (No 715), 745 (No. 796), 746 (No. 797)

Conversation with King Ferdinand, 570 (No 573).

Conversation with M Isvolski, 109-10 (No. 98), 150-5 (No 143, and *encls*), 156 (No 144).

Conversation with M. Kroupenski, 697-8 (No 725)

Conversation with Mr T Russell, 675 (No 698).

Aide-mémoire by, communicated to M. Isvolski, 153-5 (No 143, *encl*. 5, 7).

Appointment of, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, 544 (No 551, *note*), 545 (No. 552), 548 (No 553)

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Proposals by, to the Powers, August 14, 1912, 618 (*ed note*), *et sqq*.

Speech by, 707 (No. 739)

BERTIE, SIR F. (since 1915, 1st BARON; 1918, 1st VISCOUNT), British Ambassador at Rome, 1903-4; at Paris, 1905-18

To Sir E Grey, 32 (No. 28), 35-6 (No. 30), 51 (No. 43), 86 (No. 77), 127 (No 114), 129-30 (No 118), 317-8 (No. 299), 325 (No. 312), 356-7 (No. 355), 365 (No 367), 369-70 (No. 372), 397-8 (No. 409), 424 (No. 445), 613-5 (No 619), 622-3 (No 629), 635 (No. 649), 639 (No 652), 652-4 (Nos. 669-71), 663 (No. 684), 685-6 (No. 712), 688 (No. 714), 692-3 (No. 721), 702-3 (No. 734), 706 (No. 738), 708 (No. 741), 727 (No. 770), 735-6 (No 784), 737-9 (No 786-8), 739-40 (No. 790).

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- BERTIE, SIR F (since 1915, 1st BARON, 1918, 1st VISCOUNT)—(*continued*)
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- BERTOLINI, SIGNOR PIETRO, Italian Deputy, Delegate to the Italo-Turkish Peace negotiations, 1912
Provisional Treaty of Peace between Italy and Turkey, signed by, 440, 442 (No 466)
- BETHMANN HOLLWEG, HERR T VON, Prussian Minister of the Interior, 1905-7, German Minister for the Interior, 1907-9, German Imperial Chancellor, 1909-17
Conversation with Count von Aehrenthal, 70 (No 61)
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- BETHUNE, MAJOR- (later LIEUT. -) GENERAL (later SIR) E. C., Director-General of Territorial Force, 1912-7
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- BIZOT, M., French Financial Adviser to Persian Government, 1908-9
 41 (No 34).
- BOGIČEVIĆ, DR. M., Secretary of Servian Legation at Berlin, 1906-14 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*).
Conversation with Lord Granville, 726 (No 769).
- BOLLATI, SIGNOR, Italian Secretary-General of Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 1908, 1910-2, Ambassador at Berlin, 1913-5
Conversation with Mr. Dering, 664 (No 686)
Conversation with Sir R. Rodd, 271 (No 227), 276 (No 236)
- BOMPARD, M. MAURICE, French Ambassador at St Petersburg, 1902-7, at Constantinople, 1909-14
Conversation with Sir G. Lowther, 484 (No 504).
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- BOPPE, M. J. A., Councillor of French Embassy at Constantinople, 1904-14
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- H. R. R. BORIS, Crown Prince of Bulgaria
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- BOSDARI, COUNT A. DE, Councillor of Italian Embassy at London (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*), 1906-9, Minister at Sofia, 1910-3; at Athens, 1913-8
Conversation with Mr. Bax-Ironside, 485 (No 505).
Conversation with King Ferdinand, 485 (No. 505).
- BOURCHIER, MR. J. D., Correspondent of *The Times* in the Balkans.
 21 (No 20), 522 (No 531), 534 (No 540)
- BRANT, MR. R. W., Assistant Clerk in British Foreign Office, 1900-5; Librarian, 1905-14
Minute by, 326 (No 315).
- BRATIANU, M. JOAN, Rumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1901-4, Minister for the Interior, 1907-9; Prime Minister and Minister for the Interior, 1909-11; Prime Minister and Minister for War, 1914-8.
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Conversation with Count von Aehrenthal, 111 (No 99), 115 (No 103), 123 (No 110)
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Conversation with Sir C. Greene, 123-4 (No. 110)
Conversation with Signor Tittoni, 123 (No 110).
- BROWNE, MR. GORDON, Correspondent of *The Times* in Sofia, 1910
Conversation with M. Matov, 225 (No 195).

BUCHANAN, SIR GEORGE W., British Agent and Consul-General in Bulgaria, 1903-9; Minister at The Hague, 1909-10, Ambassador at St Petersburg, 1910-8; at Rome, 1919-21

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To Sir E Grey, 4 (No 1), 327 (No 316), 333 (No 321), 338 (No 331), 349 (No. 345), 352 (No 350), 354 (No 353), 359 (No 358), 360-1 (No 360), 362 (No 363), 367-8 (No. 369), 373-5 (No 377), 376 (No 380), 385 (No 390), 454-5 (No 472), 487-8 (No 507), 494-6 (No 512), 528-9 (No. 538), 544-9 (Nos 552-3), 559-61 (No 562), 591-3 (Nos 594-5), 598 (No 601), 606 (No 610), 615-7 (No 620), 621-2 (Nos 627-8), 631 (No 643), 634-5 (No. 648), 648-9 (No 665), 659-61 (No 679), 662 (No. 683), 669-73 (Nos. 693-5), 680 (No 704), 689 (No 716), 690-1 (No 718), 693-5 (No. 722), 730 (No 775), 732 (No. 778), 740-1 (No 792), 763-4 (No. 808), 769-70 (No 811)

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BUXTON, MR. NOEL, Chairman of the Balkan Committee.

Letter to the Times, February 15, 1911, 253-4 (No 213, *min.*)

CAMBON, M. JULES, French Ambassador at Madrid, 1902-7; at Berlin, 1907-14.

Conversation with Herr von Kiderlen-Waechter, 279 (No. 242), 280 (No 244), 303 (No. 276).

CAMBON, M. PAUL, French Ambassador at London, 1898-1920.

To Sir E Grey, 404 (No. 418)

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Conversation with Sir E. Grey, 302 (No. 273), 317 (No. 298), 364 (No. 366), 396-7 (No. 408), 398-9 (No. 410), 402-3 (Nos 415-6), 410 (No. 427), 418-9 (No. 436), 425 (No. 446), 539-40 (No. 546).

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CAMPBELL, MR. (since 1906, Sir) F. A., British Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1902-11

Minute by, 116 (No. 104).

CAMPBELL, MR. R. H., Clerk in British Foreign Office, 1907-13; Private Secretary to Sir A. Nicolson, 1913-6, and to Lord Hardinge, 1916-9.

Minute by, 32 (No 28), 173 (No. 154).

CARADJA, M. G. J., Greek *Chargé d'Affaires* at Belgrade, 1910-2.

Conversation with M. Spalaiković, 233 (No. 202).

CARNEGIE, MR. L. D., Councillor of British Embassy at Vienna, 1907-8 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*); at Paris, 1908-13 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*).

To Sir E Grey, 702 (No 734), 708 (No. 741)

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H.M. KING CAROL, of Rumania.

v. H.M. CHARLES I, King of Rumania.

CAROUSSO, M. C. D., Greek Minister at Bucharest, 1911-2

Conversation with Mr. Vaughan, 634 (No. 647).

CARTWRIGHT, MR (since 1908, SIR) FAIRFAX, Councillor of British Embassy at Madrid, 1905-6 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*), Minister at Munich and Stuttgart, 1906-8, Ambassador at Vienna, 1908-13

To Sir E. Grey, 8-11 (No 11), 17 (No 17), 36 (No 31), 43-4 (No 35), 47-9 (Nos 39-40), 54-6 (Nos 48-50), 69-71 (No 61), 95-6 (No 87), 98-100 (Nos 89-90), 103-5 (No 94), 108-9 (No 97), 113 (No 101), 113-5 (No 103), 117-9 (Nos 105-6), 129 (No 117), 134 (No 125), 142-5 (Nos 135-6), 149-50 (No 142), 159-60 (No 147), 166-8 (No 152), 169-73 (No 154), 190-1 (No 165), 193-4 (No 170), 195-9 (Nos 172-4), 239-40 (No 205), 250-2 (No 211), 253-4 (No 213), 257-8 (No 218), 281 (No 246), 295-6 (No 263), 299-300 (No 270), 304-5 (No 277), 312-3 (No 290), 318 (No 300), 326 (No 315), 334-5 (No 326), 336-7 (No 328), 339-40 (No 334), 342-5 (No 338), 347-8 (Nos 342-3), 400 (No 412), 426 (No 449), 459-62 (Nos 476-8), 489-90 (No 508), 496 (No 513), 503-4 (No 519), 517-9 (No 528), 534 (No 541), 541-2 (No 549), 543-4 (No 551), 570 (No 573), 607 (No 611), 618-19 (No 622), 648 (No 664), 655-6 (No 672), 675 (No 698), 689 (No 715), 745-6 (No 796-7)

Conversation with Count von Achrenthal, 12 (No 12), 46-7 (No 38), 54 (No 48), 55 (No 49), 55-6 (No 50), 69-71 (No 61), 98 (No 89), 99 (No 90), 104 (No 94), 113 (No 101), 114 (No 103), 142-3 (No 135), 143-5 (No 136), 166-8 (No 152), 190-1 (No 165), 198-9 (No 174), 241 (No 206), 257-8 (No 218), 281 (No 246), 297 (No 267, *note*), 304-5 (No 277), 312-3 (No 290), 318 (No 300), 326 (No 315), 336-7 (No 328), 347 (No 342), 348 (No 343), 458 (No 475), 459 (No 476), 461 (No 478), 489-90 (No 508).

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Conversation with M. Salabačev, 745 (No 796)

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CASSEL, SIR ERNEST, British Financier

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CECIL, LORD HUGH RICHARD HEATHCOTE, M P for Greenwich, 1895-1906, for Oxford University, 1910—

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H M CHARLES I, King of Rumania, 1881-1914

Conversation with M. Milovanović, 500 (No 516), 504 (No 519).

Conversation with Mr A. Robertson, 229-30 (No 198)

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CHARLES ALBERT, Archduke of Austria

Visit to Sofia, 1912, 551 (No 554).

CHÉRISSEY, COUNT R. DE, 1st Secretary at French Legation at Sofia, 1909-12 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*).

Conversation with Mr Bax-Ironside, 457 (No 474)

Conversation with Mr Findlay, 29 (No 25).

CHURCHILL, MR WINSTON L. S., British Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Colonies, 1906-8, President of Board of Trade, 1908-10; Secretary of State for Home Affairs, 1910-1; First Lord of Admiralty, 1911-5

Private Letter—

To Sir A. Nicolson, 278 (No. 240)

CLEMENCEAU, M. GEORGES, French Minister of the Interior, 1906; Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, 1906-9, Member of Senatorial Commission for Foreign Affairs and Army, 1911-7, Prime Minister and Minister for War, 1917-20

Conversation with Sir F. Cartwright, 47 (No. 39)

CONRAD VON HOTZENDORF, BARON (since 1918, COUNT) FRANZ, Chief of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff, 1906-11, 1912-7

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COULLARD-DESCOS, M. LEON, French Minister at Belgrade, 1907-21

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CREWE, 1ST MARQUESS OF (ROBERT O. A. CREWE-MILNES), British Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1908-10, Secretary of State for India, 1910-5, President of Board of Education, 1916, Ambassador at Paris, 1922-8

Conversation with M. Sazonov, 759-61 (No. 804).

CROWE, MR (since 1911, SIR) EYRE, Senior Clerk, British Foreign Office, 1906-12; Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1912-20, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1920-5.

Conversation with Sir F. Oppenheimer, 562 (No. 564)

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CROZIER, M., French Minister at Copenhagen, 1902-7; Ambassador at Vienna, 1907-12.

Conversation with Count von Achrenthal, 299 (No. 270), 339-40 (No. 334)

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CZERNIN VON UND ZU CHUDENITZ, OTTO, COUNT, Secretary of Austro-Hungarian Legation at Sofia, 1907-9; at Stuttgart, 1909-10, at Bucharest, 1910-2

Conversation with Mr. Findlay, 30 (No. 25)

DAESCHNER, M. GEORGES EMILE, Councillor of French Embassy at Madrid, 1906-8 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*); at London, 1909-13 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*)

Conversation with Sir E. Grey, 323 (No. 309).

Conversation with Sir A. Nicolson, 345 (No. 339, min.)

DANEV, M., President of the Bulgarian Sobranje, 1912, 1913, Delegate to the Peace Negotiations at London, 1912-3; Prime Minister, 1913

Conversation with Sir H. Bax-Ironside, 566-7 (No. 568)

Conversation with Sir G. Lowther, 102-3 (No. 93)

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Mission of, to Constantinople, 102 (No. 93), 108 (No. 96).

DAVIDSON, MR. (since 1907, SIR) W. E., Legal Adviser to the British Foreign Office, 1886-1918

Minute by, 327 (No. 315), 332 (No. 322), 333 (No. 322)

DERING, MR. (since 1917, SIR) H. G., Counsellor of Embassy at British Embassy at Rome, 1911-5 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*).

To Sir E. Grey, 422-3 (No. 442), 425-6 (No. 448), 428 (No. 453), 429-30 (No. 455), 471 (No. 491), 664 (No. 686).

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Conversation with the Marquis San Giuliano, 422-3 (No. 442), 429 (No. 455)

DESCOS.

(v. sub COULLARD-DESCOS.)

DIAMANDI, M. C. J., Rumanian Minister at Sofia, 1909-11; at Rome, 1911-3

520 (No. 529).

- DILKE, SIR CHARLES, M.P. for Forest of Dean
Speech by, in House of Commons, 31 (No 26), 46 (No 38)
- DILLON, DR E J, British Author and Journalist
Articles by, in the Fortnightly Review, 84-5 (No 75), 106 (No 95), 110 (No 98), 151-3 (No 143, encl. 2-5)
- DIMITRIEV, R. GENERAL, Bulgarian Minister at St Petersburg, 1913-4
Conversation with Lieut-Col Napier, 67-8 (No 60, and encl.)
- DJEVAD BEY, Councillor of Turkish Embassy at London, 1908-13 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*)
Conversation with Sir L Mallet, 670 (No 694, min), 682-3 (No 709)
Conversation with Sir A Nicolson, 345 (No 339)
- DJAVID BEY, Turkish Minister of Finance, 1910
Conversation with M Milovanović, 97 (No 88)
Speech by, 207-8 (No. 181, and encl.)
- DJAVID PASHA, Commander of Turkish Forces at Berana, 1912
 624 (No 631)
- DJUVARA, M, Rumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1909-11
Conversation with Sir C Greene, 111 (No 99).
- DOBROVIĆ, M, President of the Cabinet of Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria, 1908, Private Secretary to King Ferdinand, 1910
Conversation with M. Paléologue, 228 (No 197)
- DOLGORUKI, PRINCE NICHOLAS, Russian Ambassador at Rome, 1909-12.
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FILIPESCU, M. N., Rumanian Minister for War, 1911-2; Minister for Agriculture and Lands, 1912-3.
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FINDLAY, MR (since 1916, SIR) M. DE C., British Minister Resident at the Courts of Saxony and Saxe-Coburg-Gotha at Dresden, 1907-9, at Sofia, 1909-11; at Christiania, 1911-23.

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- GALIB BEY, Turkish *Chargé d'Affaires* at Bucharest, 1910; Councillor of Turkish Embassy at Berlin, 1912-3, Delegate at Greco-Turk Peace Negotiations at Athens, 1913; Minister at Athens, 1914-8
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- GEARY, MR ARTHUR B., British Vice-Consul at the Dardanelles, 1907-8, Acting Consul at Basrah, 1908, at Monastir, 1909-12, at Alexandria, 1912-3
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- GENNADIUS, M. J., Greek Minister at London, 1910-8.
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- GJERS, M. ALEXANDER A., Russian Minister at Cettinje, 1912-6
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- GRANVILLE, 3RD EARL, 2nd Secretary at British Embassy at Berlin, 1904-5; 1st Secretary at Berlin, 1905-8, at Brussels, 1908-11 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*), at Berlin, 1911-3 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*)
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GUŠOV, M. IVAN E., Bulgarian Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1911-3.

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- LAW, MR (since 1916, SIR) ALGERNON, Senior Clerk in the British Foreign Office, 1904-12; Controller of Commercial and Consular Affairs, 1912-6; Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1914-6
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- LEGRAND, M A, Councillor of French Embassy at Rome, 1902-12 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*)
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- LEONTIEV, COLONEL, Russian Military *Attaché* at Sofia, 1905-11; at Constantinople, 1913, 1914.
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- LINDSAY, HON (since 1925, SIR) R. C, Assistant Private Secretary to Sir E Grey, 1908-9; 2nd Secretary (later 1st) at The Hague, 1911-3 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*)
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- LOBANOV-ROSTOVSKI, PRINCE, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1895-6.
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- LOUIS, M. GEORGE, *Directeur Politique* at the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 1905-9; Ambassador at St. Petersburg, 1909-13.
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LOWTHER, MR (since 1907, SIR) G A, British Minister at Tangier, 1905-8, Ambassador at Constantinople, 1908-13

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MACLEAY, MR (later SIR) J W R, 2nd (later 1st) Secretary at British Legation at Mexico, 1907-10 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*), at the Foreign Office, 1910-1; at Brussels, 1911-4 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*); Counsellor of Embassy at Pekin, 1914-6

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MALLET, MR (since 1912, SIR) LOUIS, Assistant Clerk in British Foreign Office, 1902-5, Private Secretary to Sir E. Grey, 1905-6; Senior Clerk, 1906-7; Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1907-13; Ambassador at Constantinople, 1913-4.

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- MAXWELL, MR. R. P., Private Secretary to Sir T. H. Sanderson, 1894-6; Assistant Clerk in British Foreign Office, 1896-1902, Senior Clerk in British Foreign Office, 1902-13
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- MAYCOCK, MR. (since 1913, SIR) W. R. D., Clerk in British Foreign Office, 1872-1903, Superintendent of Treaty Department, 1903-13
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- MEHMET TALAT BEY, First Vice-President of Turkish Chamber of Deputies, 1909, Minister of the Interior, 1909-13
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- MENSENDORFF-POUILLY-DIETRICHSTEIN, ALBERT, Count, 1st Secretary at the Austro-Hungarian Embassy at London, 1904, Ambassador at London, 1904-14
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- MENSHIKOFF, M., Russian Publicist
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- MÉREY VON KAPOŠ-MÉRE, HERR K., Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at Rome, 1910-5.
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- METTERNICH, COUNT PAUL VON WOLFF, German Ambassador at London, 1901-12
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- MILOVANOVIĆ, M. M. G., Servian Minister at Rome, 1906, Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1908-12; Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1911-2.
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O'BEIRNE, MR H J, 2nd Secretary at British Embassy at Paris, 1900-4; 1st Secretary, 1904; at Washington, 1905; at Paris, 1905-6, Counsellor of Embassy at St Petersburg, 1906-15 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*)

To Sir E. Grey, 25-6 (No 22), 51-2 (No 44), 53-4 (No 47), 201-3 (Nos 177-8), 206 (No 180), 212-6 (Nos 185-7), 223-5 (Nos 193-4), 226-7 (No 196), 294 (No 260), 314 (No 293), 321 (No 305), 322 (No 307), 401-2 (No 414), 404-5 (No 419), 407-9 (Nos 422-5), 417 (No 433), 467 (No 484), 469 (No 487), 471 (No 490), 473 (No 493), 477-8 (No 499), 480-2 (No 502), 575-7 (Nos 579-81), 578-83 (Nos 583-5), 583-4 (No 587)

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ONSLOW, COLONEL SIR RICHARD W. A. ONSLOW, 5TH EARL OF, Assistant Private Secretary to Sir E. Grey, 1909-10, Clerk in British Foreign Office, 1910-3, Private Secretary to Sir A. Nicolson, 1911-3; Assistant Clerk, 1913-4

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To Sir E. Grey, 217-8 (No 189), 283-4 (No 249), 450-2 (No 470), 472 (No 492), 496-7 (No 514), 503 (No 522), 590-1 (No 593), 593 (No 596), 594 (No 597), 596-8 (No 600), 612 (No 616), 643-4 (No 659), 676-7 (No 701), 679 (No 703), 704 (No 736), 707-8 (No 740), 710-2 (No 743), 716 (No 748), 719-20 (No 756), 742-4 (No 795)

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PALÉOLOGUE, M MAURICE, French Diplomatic Agent and Consul-General (since 1909, Minister) at Sofia, 1907-12, Political Director at Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 1912-4, Ambassador at St Petersburg, 1914-7

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PALLAVICINI, COUNT VON, Austro-Hungarian Minister at Bucharest, 1899-1906, Ambassador at Constantinople, 1906-18, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1911

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PANAFIEU, M H A DE, Councillor of French Embassy at St Petersburg, 1907-12, Minister at Sofia, 1912-5

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PANAS, M. D, Secretary-General at Greek Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 1909; Minister at Sofia, 1910-3, Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1913-4, Minister at Constantinople, 1914-6

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PAPRIKOV, GENERAL, Bulgarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1908-10, Minister at St Petersburg, 1910-2; Delegate at Peace Negotiations at London, 1912-3.

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PARKER, MR ALWYN, Clerk in British Foreign Office, 1906-12; Assistant Clerk, 1912-7, Librarian, 1918-9

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PETKOVIĆ, M T, Servian Minister at Cettinje, 1909-11
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POKLEVSKI-KOZIELL, M P, 1st Secretary to Russian Embassy at London, 1902-9 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*), Minister at Tehran, 1909-13

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POPOVIĆ, M, Servian Minister at St. Petersburg, 1907-14

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PRINETTI, SIGNOR, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1901-3
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PSYCHA, M. P. G, Greek *Chargé d'Affaires* at St Petersburg, 1910-2

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RECOULX, M., Foreign Editor of the *Figaro*.

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REFİK BEY, Turkish 1st Secretary at Sofia, 1908-12 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*).

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RİFAAT PAŞA, Turkish Ambassador at London, 1908-9, Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1909-11; Ambassador at Paris, 1911-4.

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RODD, SIR J RENNELL, Secretary of British Embassy at Rome, 1901-3 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*); Councillor of Embassy, 1904; Minister at Stockholm, 1904-8; Ambassador at Rome, 1908-21

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Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1886, 1892-4
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SACERDOTI, COUNT B, Councillor of Italian Embassy at Constantinople, 1911 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*).
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SALS, J F. C, COUNT DE, Councillor of British Embassy at Berlin, 1906-11 (sometimes *Chargé d'Affaires*); Minister at Cetinje, 1911-6.
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SALISBURY, THE 3RD MARQUIS OF, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1878-80, 1885-6, 1887-92, June 29, 1895-November 12, 1900, Prime Minister, June 29, 1895-July 12, 1902

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